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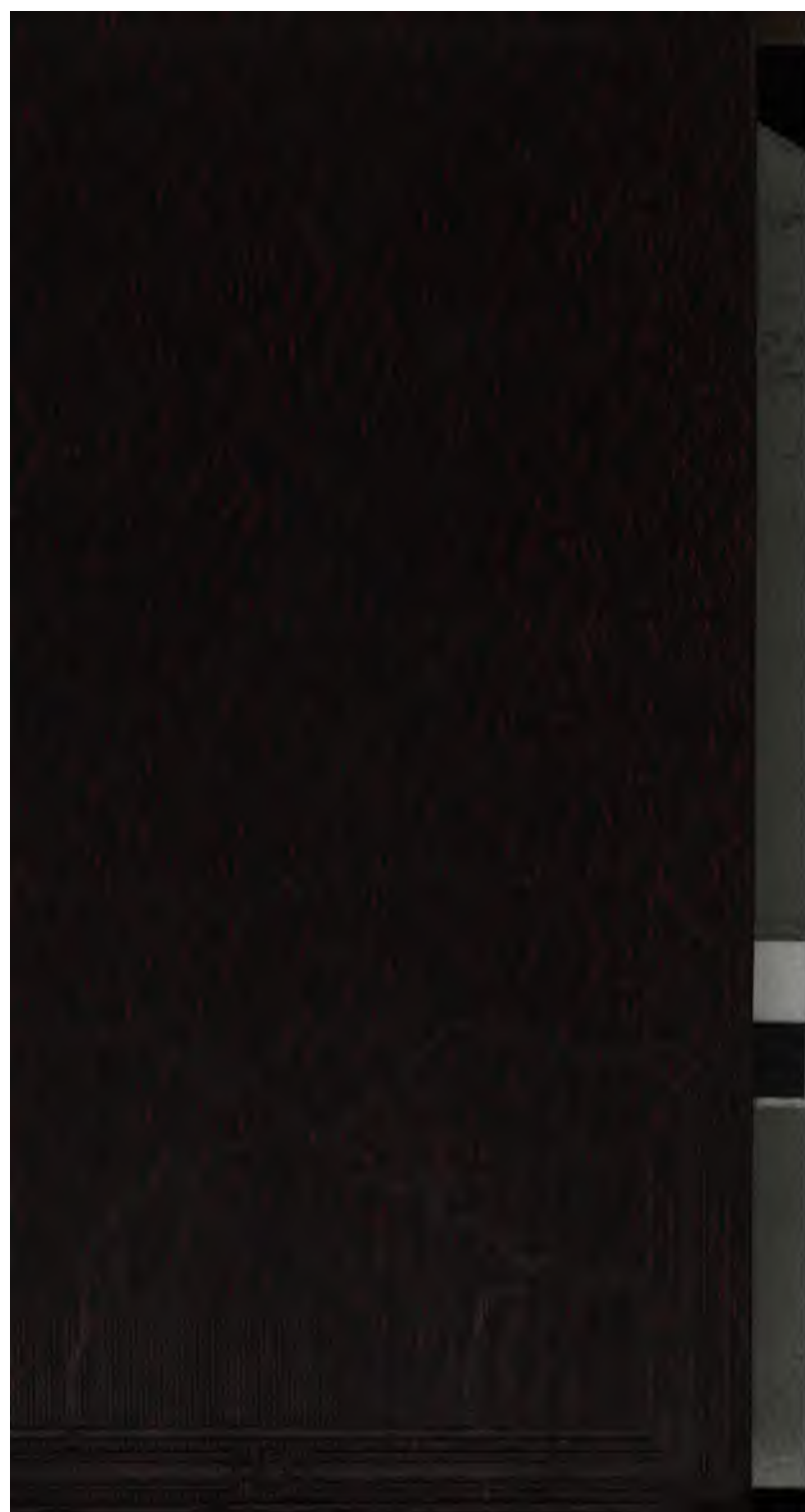
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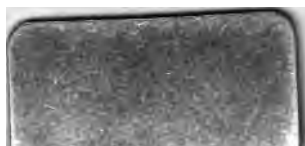
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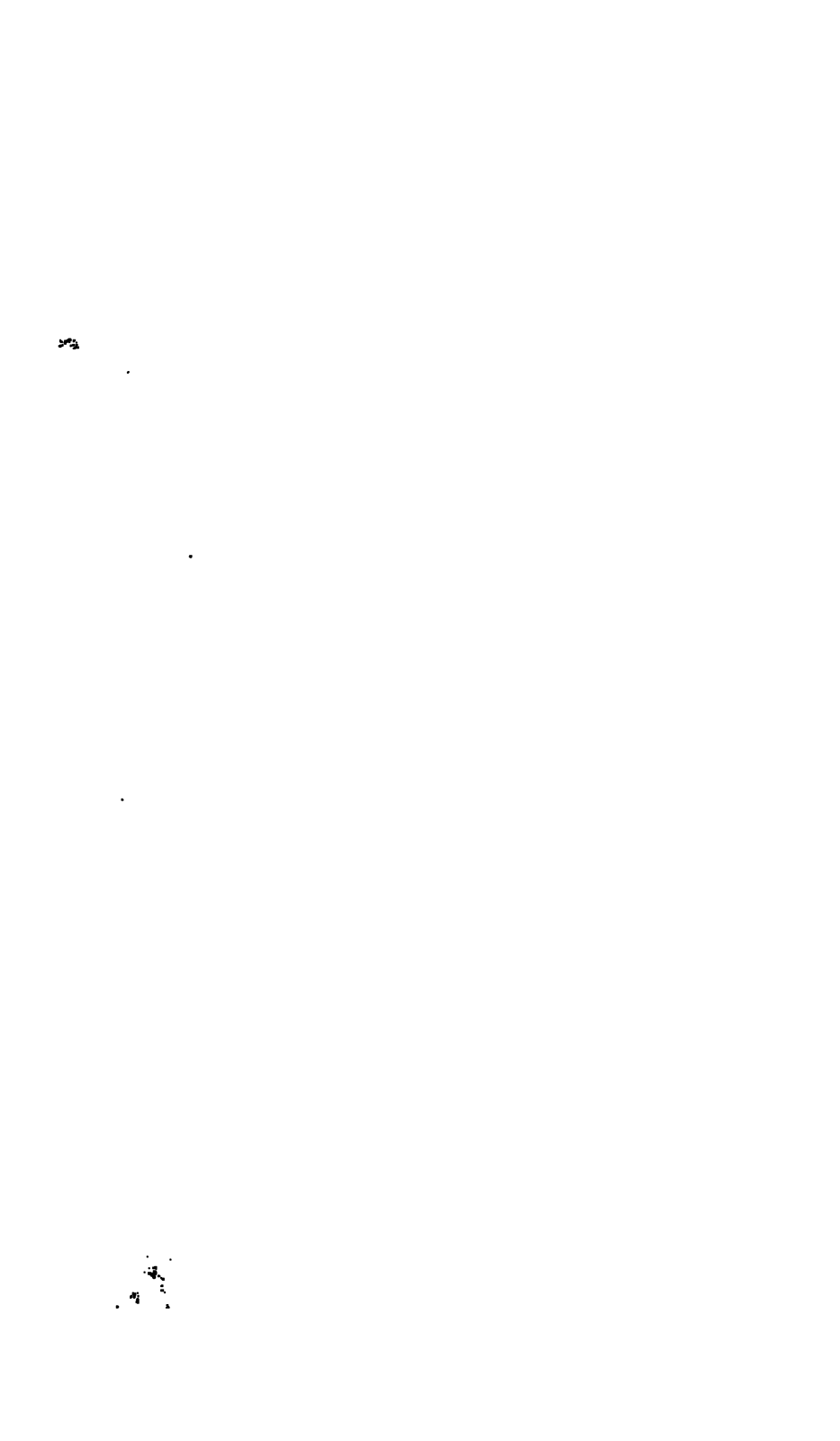
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CLAUDE
THE COLPORTEUR.

BY
THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL."

"A Sower went forth to sow."

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CLAUDE *the* COLPORTEUR.

CHAPTER I.

CLAUDE FIRST SEES LISA.

“**Y**OU look tired, my son,” said an old woman bending under a load of fresh-cut grass on her back, as she came up to a dusty, travel-worn wayfarer resting on the road-side.

“Tired I am, good mother,” replied he, turning towards her a frank though somewhat care-worn countenance; “tired, foot-sore, and thirsty; yet must I reach the town to-night, for I shall be busied there early to-morrow. Have I much farther to go?”

“A good league; that is to say, a *long* league,” replied the old woman.

“Ha! that is a bad hearing,” rejoined he, “for

the fact is, I have broken a thorn into my foot, and limp sadly."

"Let me take it out for you," said the old woman, "for I'm counted to have a ready hand at such matters. Stay, I fear I have no sharp implement about me. . . . I have left my housewife at home, and a brass pin might poison the flesh. Come on with me a little way, if you can; my cottage is but on yonder knoll, behind the cherry-orchard, and I will there take out your thorn before you can say Ave!"

"It will be long enough before I say Ave," returned the traveller, smiling; "but I thank you heartily, good mother, and will readily accept your kindness."

"Gently, then—don't hurry," said she, helping him up. "If it were not for this load of fodder for our old white cow, I'd carry your bag for you, if not yourself into the bargain."

"Come," said he, laughing, "I'm rather too heavy for that."

"I'm not worth what I have been, it's true," said she, "but the time has been, I can tell you, when I have lifted a sick person a good deal heavier than you are. However, no good comes

of boasting; the case, as it stands, is, that you must carry your bag, and I my grass."

"In England, now," said the traveller, "they let the cows help themselves to their grass."

"Is it possible?" said the old woman. "What strange people they must be! Ah, I don't grudge my trouble for poor Snowdrop; and I am sure she thanks me in her dumb way with her large, brown eyes."

"The English would tell you," rejoined the wayfarer, "that she would thank you much more for turning her out into a fine field of clover."

"She would conduct herself like a maniac," returned the old woman, "fling up her tail and heels sky-high, trample and waste ten times more than she ate; and eat till she burst! Children, sick persons, and irrational animals, must take what is given them, and be thankful. But see, there is our cottage, with the row of white pigeons on the roof, and there's Lisa in her scarlet petticoat standing in the porch, feeding her tame thrush from her mouth. The poor bird is so fond of her that he often shews his gratitude by bringing her a crumb or a berry; and, one day, he popped into her mouth a fine live worm! Lisa

will soon give me one of her sharpest needles, and I will have out your thorn in a minute. Meantime, I cannot bear to see you limp so. Surely, I *can* carry your bag? Let me try! Why, 'tis as heavy as lead! You must be carrying an iron weight slung round your neck for a penance?"

"Oh no, good mother, I torment myself with no such self-imposed punishments; and as to my load of books, I assure you that to me *my burthen is light.*"

"Books, have you? My son Hans will be overhauling them presently! He's a regular book-devourer, that fellow! I often tell him he should have been a priest instead of a poor wood-carver."

By this time they reached the foot of a few rustic steps which led to the door of the low, steep-roofed, heavy-built cottage, with its tiny casements peering out through a luxuriant mantle of ivy, which also clustered round a niche in the porch, containing a rude, weather-stained group of the Virgin and Child, with a little lamp of blue glass hanging before it.

In the porch, feeding her tame bird, stood a young girl of eighteen, with a fresh, sweet, round

face, drooping eyelids, and sweeping dark lashes falling on her rosy, peach-like cheeks. There was a great air of modesty and goodness about her: as soon as she saw the old woman approaching, she ran out to relieve her of her burthen, and cast a look of smiling inquiry towards her companion.

“I want one of your sharpest needles, Lisa,” said the old woman; “this worthy young man has broken a thorn into his foot, and I have promised to extract it for him.”

“Lie there, then,” said Lisa to the grass, tumbling it down against the wall, and tripping into the cottage. “Is this one too small, grandmother?”

“No, this will do exactly,” said the old woman. “Come in, friend, come in, make no ceremony—you are heartily welcome.”

The stranger, thus bidden, stepped into the cottage, and found himself in a large old kitchen, with a funnel-shaped chimney in it, on the hearth of which glowed the embers of a very small fire. A thick wooden pillar, decorated by a crucifix, supported the rafters, from which dangled strings of onions, dried apples, and sausages. A

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rude table was covered by a clean white cloth, on which were spread knives and cups, a large loaf, a strong-smelling cheese, a dish of huge crimson radishes, their green leaves yet glittering with recent washing, and a tall brown jug of beer.

On a smaller table, near one of the little case-ments, was heaped quite a cloud of clear white muslin, at which, to judge by the thimble, scissors, and reel of cotton close at hand, Lisa had recently been busily employed. At a work-bench just beneath the other window, sat a somewhat hard-featured man of about forty, intently occupied in manufacturing what seemed to be rather clumsy dolls, some of which were in progress, others finished, and adorned with a little red and white paint on their faces; while round him lay tools, shavings, paint-pots, and brushes, ready to hand.

"Welcome, friend," said he, nodding at the stranger as he looked up for a moment from his work, which he immediately resumed.

"That's my son Hans," said the old woman. "He is very busy, which is the reason he cannot seem more glad to see you. Now, then,"—patting

a wooden settle by the hearth, as she spoke, "sit down here, my good fellow, whip off your shoe and sock, put your foot on this stool, and we'll have out the thorn in a trice. Come, give me the other shoe, too, and I'll clap them together outside the door, for they are covered with dust. Mercy on us, though! how your foot is inflamed! You must have walked far on it, I fancy, after the mischief was done. Just look at it, Hans!"

Hans cast a hasty glance over his shoulder, and at the same time eyed the new-comer from head to foot. There was something foreign and picturesque in his simple dress; he was of light yet vigorous make, and appeared about eight-and-twenty years of age. The expression of his mouth and eyes was exceedingly good, his complexion was brown and healthy, his hair dark, and slightly curling.

"Whew!" cried he, drawing in his breath with a comic air of pain, as the old lady made rather a sharp inquisition with her needle.

"If I can find aught of the thorn," said she, "my name's not Agnes. The long and short of the matter is, your foot must be poulticed. Set on a little bread and milk to boil, Lisa."

"That I will, directly," said the girl ; proceeding to obey her with alertness—"the milk stands outside—I had but just finished milking when you came in."

"I am afraid you are going to make a long job of it, my kind friend," said the wayfarer.

"Is your time so precious?" said Mother Agnes, looking up in his face.

"Oh, no ! only I had hoped to push on to the town before dusk, and get me a bed."

"The town is full to overflowing," said she, "for to-morrow, as you doubtless know, is our saint's day, and there is to be a grand procession, which strangers are flocking from all parts to see. Wherefore, even if you could manage to limp or hobble thither, which I very much doubt, it is extremely unlikely that you would get any better accommodation than a stable. Whereas, if you remain here, you shall sup with us and have a clean bed, and I will dress your foot and ensure your travelling with comfort to-morrow. Will that suit you, do you think?"

"*Suit* me, my generous hostess? I am only too ready to accept your kindness!"

"Say no more, then, but consider yourself one

of us, till the morrow. You are welcome—is not he, Hans ? ”

“ Heartily welcome,” said Hans.

“ And now,” said she, “ that I have bound up your foot, you shall remain just where you are, and get your bread and cheese. Not your beer, though, for milk will be better for you to-night ; or, suppose, coffee ? Yes, there is some fresh roasted ; not that we allow ourselves such a treat often, but to-morrow is a festival. I will grind it directly ; and, meantime, as you are feverish, Lisa shall give you a draught of new milk.”

He gratefully applied his lips to the brim of the foaming pail, which she, smiling, held to him.

“ Delicious ! ” cried he.

“ Yes ; there’s nothing like new milk, when you can’t get beer or coffee,” said Hans. “ Hallo, Lisa ! You’ve knocked over the red paint. Mind where you’re going, girl. Do you come from far, master ? ”

“ Oh yes, I am always on the tramp. They call me Claude the Colporteur. I have books to hawk.”

“ Books ! capital ! ” cried Hans, suspending

his work for a moment. "I should like to turn over the contents of your bag, only that I am so busy. Maybe you will read us a spell by and by—"

"Gladly," said Claude.

"Do you happen, now," pursued Hans, "to have a copy of 'The Terrible and Unparalleled History of the Man-Wolf, who lived in the Forest of Bondy, and devoured many Women and Children?'"

"No."

"Ah, I fear 'tis out of print; more the pity! Have you, then, 'The Heroic History of Count Rudolf, who, on his Return from the Holy Land, found his Wife married to his deadly Enemy: ' whereon the Count fought his rival, the rival slew the Count, and the Countess took poison?'"

"Neither have I that, Master Hans. Oh, no; mine are good books—godly books."

"Well, I hope I like godly books too," said Hans, looking a little disappointed however.

"You shall read me a spell after supper—"

"Which is now ready," said his mother, "so wipe the paint off your hands, Master Hans, and come and say grace like a good Christian."

.

"What a noble white lily you have in your garden!" said Claude, gazing at it through the open door with admiration.

"Ah, that's for me to-morrow," said Lisa, with a bright smile. "I am to walk in the procession, dressed in white, crowned with ivy, and carrying the lily. Will not that be charming?"

"*You* will be charming, doubtless," said Claude rather gravely.

"And my two little brothers are to sing hymns of praise, in white albs, and crowned with flowers!"

"Hymns to God?"

"To our patron saint."

"Oh," said Claude coldly. Then addressing himself to Hans, "You seem very busy making dolls, Master," observed he.

"Dolls!" repeated Hans, laughing. "No; my time is not quite so much wasted as in doing that. They are images of our patron saint!"

"Oh!—"

"I suppose you are aware that an image of our blessed Lady fell down from heaven many years ago, into a certain pool in these parts? Ever since, the water of that pool has been

famous for effecting miraculous cures, especially on the day of our patron saint. A church was built over the pool, a town formed round the church, and for many years the throngs of pilgrims resorting to it on the Saint's day, caused money to circulate freely among us. Of late years, the zeal of pilgrims has been much diverted to other shrines; but a revival has been occasioned by the zealous preaching of some monks, which will, we expect, result in a great influx of pilgrims to our shrine to-morrow. To supply the demand for images of the Virgin and our Saint, which is looked for, I have nearly completed a stock that would surprise you. Most of them are already dressed; my mother will complete the others after supper, as fast as I can hand them over to her, and will sell them at the church gate to-morrow. So, there you have the history of my *dolls*, as you call them," concluded Hans, laughing.

"The pageant will be lovely," continued Lisa, turning her beautiful eyes towards Claude, "the streets are already decorated with birch boughs arching across, so as to form charming arcades; shrines adorned with gold, with silver, and with

flowers, will be seen at the corners of the streets; blue, green, and scarlet banners will float from the windows; the bells will ring, the pilgrims will sing hymns, incense will perfume the air;—the scene will be one of enchantment ! ”

“ And there is to be a miracle-play,” added her grandmother, “ and Lisa was to have played the Virgin Mary ; but another girl manœuvred her out of the part, which our Lisa bore, I will say for her, with the sweetest temper ! ”

“ Oh, granny, it is not worth speaking about,” said Lisa, softly blushing, and looking away.

“ The Virgin Mary ? ” repeated Claude, reflectively. “ Do you know, now, the sound of her name, coupled with a play, grates on my ears ! I suppose you will think me a fastidious fellow.”

“ Oh, no, I shall not,” said Lisa, “ for really a strange kind of feeling came over me after I had accepted the part, for it seemed to me I was not good enough. So that, on the whole, I was rather thankful that Theresa put herself forward.”

“ I am sure, if you are not good enough, *she* is not, nor cannot be ! ” cried Mother Agnes, warmly. “ What say you, son Hans ? ”



CHAPTER II.

CLAUDE TROUBLES LISA.

“**W**HAT I say,” returned Hans, bluntly, “is, that I think you had best not make the girl conceited. I’m pretty nearly sick, for my part, of hearing of nothing from morning to night but muslin gowns, ivy crowns, and all the rest of it. They’re all very well in their way. And why are we supping without the children? Where are Max and Quentin? School must have been over long ago.”

“They’re being kept in for a rehearsal,” said Mother Agnes. “Their voices are sweet as linnets’, pretty dears! as Master Hamelin knows right well. He makes much count of them, and will tutor them to the last. ’Tis no use setting on their thick milk before they return, it will only burn. Oh, here they are!”

At the same moment, two rosy, panting little boys burst into the kitchen. They had evidently been racing home, and were still so full of play that they could not refrain from giving each other sundry pokes and punches. Fine, curly-headed little urchins they were, too; but much more fitted for their coarse blouses and clouted shoes than for angels' garments of white and gold.

"Give over, Max," said Quentin, returning his brother's box on the ear, and then staring hard at Claude and his swathed foot.

"What made you so late, boys?" said their father.

"There was another rehearsal, father; thank goodness, the last!—and crowds of people to hear us. Among others, some English travellers, such comical bodies! but so grand!—and I heard one of the ladies whisper to one of the milords that we sang like little angels, and how spiritual it was. Father Jan heard her as well as I, I know, I could see it in the corner of his eye; and then he swelled out his chest and beat time more consequentially than ever; but just then, little Peterkin, who is always up to some mischief, ran a brass pin into me, up to the head, I do believe!

so that made me cry out; and then Father Jan, in a rage, gave me a rap on the head, for which I could have cried out still louder, only I dared not. So I only whimpered a little; and the English lady looked greatly put out, and muttered, 'What a shame!'—It *was* a shame, too, wasn't it, father?"

"See! there goes another procession along the road; priests, pilgrims, banners and all!" cried Max, running to the door. "How tired they look!—all in a smother of dust! Men and boys, women and girls, all muttering over their rosaries. I wonder where they'll all sleep to-night!"

"Where, indeed!" grumbled Hans; "they never consider that beforehand; that's the worst of these pilgrimages."

"All the inns are full, even the stables," said Quentin, "I heard people say so."

"Oh, they must pack in where they can," said Mother Agnes, gazing after the procession.

"Well, but there's no place left to pack in!" persisted Quentin.

"The Lord will provide," said Mother Agnes.

"Well, I hope he will," muttered Hans, returning to his work-bench, "but I shouldn't like

Lisa to be among that rabblement, for all that."

" Lisa !—no."

" Well, and why not Lisa, as well as any other honest girl, *if* the Lord will provide ? Where's your faith, mother ?"

His mother made no answer, but began stirring the thick milk over the fire. Claude, unable to leave his seat, had obtained a bird's-eye glimpse of the procession through the door.

" Picturesque ! " sighed he.

" And yet you look sad," said Lisa, who overheard him.

" I *feel* sad," he replied, averting his eyes.

" Do you know," said she softly, as she stood near him at her sewing, " I liked what you said about the Virgin just now."

" Indeed ? "

" Yes, even though it was rather at my expense. There seemed something beautiful in your reverence for her. For my part, I quite adore her !"

" Ah," said he, with another sad smile, " that is precisely what *I* do not !"

" Is it possible ? And yet—"

—" Come, master !" cried Hans from his work-

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bench, "you promised to read me a spell from one of those books of yours after supper."

"And so I will, gladly," replied Claude, untying his bag. "You know I told you they were all on grave subjects."

"None the worse for that. Are they published by authority?"

"Oh, yes; by the highest authority."

"Nay then, you can't read amiss."

"What will you have?" said Claude, hesitating. "Here is the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, and what he said on earth, and what people said to him."

"That cannot be otherwise than good," said Hans, wringing the nose of one of his little saints with a pair of pincers; "but yet,—one knows all that so well. Have you ne'er a life of some saint?"

"Oh yes, here's the life of as great a saint as ever lived."

"That must be St. Peter, then," said Hans.

"No, it is not St. Peter. I won't tell you his name, but I will read you something about him, and then you shall tell me who he is."

“ Very well, perhaps I may be deeper versed in legends than you think, unlearned fellow though I am,” said Hans, smiling, and dipping his brush into the white paint.

“ ‘ At this time,’ ” began Claude, reading aloud in a distinct, impressive voice, “ ‘ there arose no small stir about that way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain to the craftsmen ; whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this . . . ”

“ Now I come to his name,” said Claude, interrupting himself, “ can you give it me ? ”

“ No, you baffle me,” returned Hans, who had paused from his work. “ But go on ; the style and story please me. But, *craft* ? Who was this Diana ? a saint ?—Why was it a craft to make and sell her shrines ? ”

“ Ah, now you are stretching the word beyond what is here meant,” said Claude. “ Craft here stands for trade ; though it might well be said that it *was* craft, truly, in the worst sense, to

make shrines, and get silly, ignorant people to buy them, in honour of a false goddess or saint. Diana was the personification of chastity; of womanly holiness and purity."

—"Hum!" said Hans; "well; go on."

—" 'this (man) hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they can be no gods *which are made with hands*: so that not only this our craft is in danger,'—(*trade*, you know, Master Hans, just as your craft is making saints), —' but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.' "

"Just as we all worship the Virgin Mary," put in Hans.

" 'When they heard these sayings,' " pursued Claude, " 'they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! And the whole city was filled with confusion; and, having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, (Paul's companions in travel)... ' "

"Ah, now you've let the cat out of the bag!" cried Hans; "'Tis St. Paul!—keep on: I like it."

—“ ‘ they rushed with one accord into the theatre. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another : for the assembly was confused ; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians ! And when the town-clerk had appeased the people, he said, Men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter ? ’ ”

“ Just like our Virgin,” muttered Hans.

““Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men,

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who are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. Wherefore, if Demetrius and the craftsmen which are with him have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies : let them implead one another ! But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.' "

—" How well he reads ! " exclaimed Mother Agnes with admiration, as Claude closed the book.

" How spirited the narration is ! " said Hans, resuming his brush, which had remained idle. " You may set aside that life of the saint for me, Master Claude ; I shall buy it. "

" But there are lives of other saints bound up along with it, " said Claude.

" All the better, " said Hans, " if they are equally well written ; I like the sample so much, that I will take them on trust. "

" Thank you, my worthy friend. May God's

blessing be on you as you read ; I think you will find you have not made a bad bargain. But yet, shall I give you another sample or two ?”

“ By all means,” said Hans.

Claude spent a little time in turning over the pages.

“ I hardly know whether you will like to hear what I have opened upon now,” said he, hesitating ; “ It is spoken by one having authority.”

“ Let’s have it, then, by all means,” said Hans ; “ Don’t scruple, man, nor mince matters !”

“ The speaker says,” pursued Claude, “ ‘ They that make a graven image are all of them vanity ; and their delectable things shall not profit ; they are their own witnesses ; they see not, nor know ; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for anything ? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed : and the workmen, they are but of men : let them all be gathered together, let them stand up ; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms : yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth : he drinketh

no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it to bake bread, and yet maketh thereof a graven image, and *worshippeth* it!. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he roasteth flesh; he warmeth himself with it, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!—and with the residue thereof he *maketh a god!* falleth down to it! worshippeth it! prayeth unto it! sayeth, Deliver me, for thou art my God! ”

“That is strongly put,” said Hans, as Claude paused.

“Strongly put? Is it not *true*?” said Claude. “Has not your good mother just swept up your shavings, and thrown them on the fire?”

“Yes—only, I don’t *worship* these dolls.”

"If you don't, those will who buy them."

"Well, that's true. If one could suppose, now, that what you have just been reading was spoken by one who had a *right* to speak—"

"*It is!*" cried Claude, his whole face lighting up with some fire from within; "It's the word of God himself! It begins, '*Thus saith the LORD.*'"

"Aye? And the book is"

"The Bible!"

"I thought as much!" ejaculated Mother Agnes, with a long breath that was almost a sigh.

"The Bible? I'm curious to see one," said Hans, with a singular expression stealing over his face; "I've heard of it often." And he stretched out his hand.

"Don't touch it, father!" cried Lisa, stepping forward.

"Not touch it, pussy? And why not?"

"It's dangerous!"

"How do you know? Have you read it?"

"Oh no! But the priests say so. It teaches bad things. It teaches people to despise the blessed Virgin."

"Nay," interposed Claude, "listen to this.—"

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‘ And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women.’ ”

“ That’s the Angelus,” said Lisa.

“ What you call the Angelus is nothing more or less than a text taken out of the Bible. Read it with your own eyes ! It was found here and nowhere else. I thought you said just now,” added Claude, softening his voice, “ that you were pleased with me because you saw that I revered the Virgin.”

“ I did ! but you replied that you did not love her.”

“ No ! You said you quite adored her. . . . I only said I could not do that—I can reverence and love her, but I only adore God ! ”

“ Not the mother of God ? ”

“ No created being. Christ himself said, Woman, what have I to do with thee ? He addressed his mother as a very woman.”

“ I won’t hear you,” said Lisa, flushing deeply. “ It’s rank heresy. What business have you to come here, saying things to unsettle our faith ? I love, I adore the Virgin ! She is my hope, my life, my all ! ”—clasping her hands, and looking

upwards with intense devotion. "Take our religion from us, and you take everything! It is fine, reasoning and discussing things now, when we are all in health, but who *gave* us that health? who obtained it for us, with every other blessing? Who may withdraw it from us in a moment? And what have we left, on our death-beds, if we have forfeited our best friend?"

"All excellent, most excellent," said Claude, in a penetrating voice, "if spoken of the Son instead of the mother. . . ."

"The Son *hears* the intercession of the mother!"

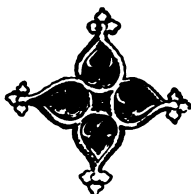
"Say, rather, the Father hears the intercession of the Son."

"You are cleverer than I; I can't argue with you," cried Lisa, passionately, "but you shall not undermine my faith; nor the faith of my dear little brothers. I'll go to bed the minute we have sung the Ave Maria. Play for us at once, father."

And reaching down a violin, she gave it to Hans, and, with her face averted from Claude, and an arm round the neck of each of her little brothers, prepared to sing the evening hymn to

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the Virgin. Hans played a few solemn notes ; the little boys lifted up their voices and sang like larks : Lisa's heart throbbed so wildly that she could not command her voice ; she sang a few faltering notes, struggled with a sob, kissed her father, and was gone.





CHAPTER III.

CLAUDE RELATES HIS HISTORY.

HANS drew the bow across the strings of his violin, so as to produce a dissonant sort of wail, and then set it aside. "What an uproar you have made!" said he abruptly.

"Dear, dear, dear!" said Mother Agnes, more in sorrow than in anger, "to think that you should make such a return as this, for my bringing you home and doing so much for you! You have sent Lisa off to bed quite in a huff, poor dear!"

"I grieve," said Claude, "that my conduct should appear to you so ungrateful, as I know it must do. I was hungry," added he, with feeling, "and you gave me meat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took

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me in ; lame and in pain, and you ministered unto me."

" Don't name it," said Mother Agnes, busying herself in lighting a brazen lamp, which the waning daylight rendered necessary. " Christians should help one another ; and a Christian I take you to be, in spite of the hard things you have been saying."

" Even our blessed Lord did that sometimes," said Claude. " His disciples objected it to him, ' This is a hard saying, who can receive it ? ' And yet what he had been telling them about his flesh being meat indeed, the true bread from heaven, became easy enough to receive when he instituted the sacramental feast."

" Ah, we are all poor ignorant creatures," said Hans. " There's many a nut I find too hard to crack, without counting those you have given me to-night. But let us see this book of yours," continued he, smiling and stretching out his hand. " Perhaps it may have all the more savour for me for being prohibited ; at any rate, I'm too old to be hurt by it. But I'm glad Lisa has gone off out of hearing, nevertheless ; for though the shaping and hammering these wretched little images has

somewhat impaired my reverence for them, I love to see my children, and especially my daughter, religious."

"Who would not?" said Claude. "Heaven forbid that I should be such a demon as to try to make her otherwise! No; I respect her zeal, mistaken though it is, and would only divert it to a higher object."

"You talk in riddles," said Hans; "for my part, I can't make out what you have been quarrelling about."

"Do not call it by so harsh a name," said Claude. "I was very zealous for the Lord of Hosts, and would not have his glory ascribed to another."

"And she was very zealous for the blessed Virgin, and called this book dangerous," said Hans. "Well, may it not be so?"

"If it be, it can only be so to them that are lost," said Claude, "for it is the word of God himself, addressed to *all*. He says, 'Ho, *every one* that thirsteth, come ye to the living waters!' And the Lord Jesus promised the apostles, who were commissioned to write accounts of all he had said and done while on earth, that the Holy

Ghost should bring all things to their remembrance. He did not leave them dependent on their infirm, unassisted human memories. How, otherwise, should they have recorded, word for word, page after page of his discourses? And yet, so clear is it to the reflecting reader, that never man spake as they *have* represented him speaking, that it is self-evident his words must be faithfully set down from heavenly inspiration. And is not such a record precious?"

"Truly it ought to be," said Hans; "but why, then, do our priests say it must be withheld from the unlearned?"

"Because they have departed in many things from the pure doctrine of God, and fear to have it found out. They know that the Church, as it now is, and the Bible cannot stand together. And they choose that the Church should stand."

"For reasons good," said Hans, sardonically laughing. "It is too much to their own interest in many ways that it should be so. And yet there are some good men amongst them," added he, growing grave. "And yet, it was one of the best and most devoted of these picked few who shook my faith in them all! He wanted my co-opera-

tion in what he termed a pious fraud ; . . an *ingenious* but a most impious one, it would have been, if I had consented to it ! I would not. He was brought short up ; baffled, provoked, and, in some measure, abashed ! He said a little to me about it—no matter what ! I could see his reasoning was not good, and told him so. Some of his brethren would, in his case, have there-upon threatened me, but he did not ; he went away, and I never saw him more. But you see, master Claude, I've had my own thoughts about these matters since. . . . Come, give me the book."

Claude, to his great surprise, suddenly advanced, laid his hand strongly on his shoulder, held the other appealingly up to heaven, looked upwards with all his soul in his eyes ; and, as if addressing some one with whom he was in immediate communion, said :—

"Lord God ! bless thine own word to this man's soul, I beseech thee, in the name of Jesus Christ !"

A deep colour mounted to Hans's temples. He was struck with the abruptness and energy of the address, as well as with some accidental

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likeness which the look and gesture of Claude bore to that of a picture of St. John preaching in the Wilderness, which he had seen in the church of the Baptist.

“You are very earnest!” said he, after a moment’s pause; “Are you *paid* for what you are doing?”

“I have just enough to keep me, from a few benevolent persons.”

“Some per centage on the books you sell?”

“No.”

“No? then why have you their distribution so much at heart?”

“Because I feel an imperative impulse to place in the hands of others the means by which I myself have been made perfectly happy. I am a Vaudois. In our favoured valleys, you perhaps know that the pure Gospel has been handed down from father to son from the earliest days of Christianity. We have bled for it, fought for it; and though we no longer die for it, we live for it. My father was a soldier under General Godin during the revolutionary war, and could tell of the fatal night when the defenceless inhabitants of La Tour and St. Jean were to have been massacred by the

Roman Catholics. He was one of the Protestant soldiers who wrung from their General permission to fly to the defence of their homes. A tremendous thunder storm which burst over the valleys befriended them by dismaying the conspirators, who failed to assemble at the appointed time, and on learning the succours that the devoted villages had obtained, they abandoned their enterprise. But that is a tale for a winter hearth."

"I never heard of it, however," said Hans.

"My father," continued Claude, "was continually absent from us with his regiment, but my mother dwelt in her native valley, tending a few cows, goats, and sheep with my assistance. As I grew older I loved to accompany the hunters in pursuit of the chamois, an animal little larger than a goat, but much superior to it in power and agility. The strongest man cannot hold one of a month old. They bound from rock to rock to a prodigious distance, gaining the loftiest summits, and precipitating themselves from them without fear. Their skins are so valuable to the French glovers that the chamois hunters are well paid for their trouble; and though many perish annually, the danger has a delicious excitement in it."

"I am ready to take your word for it," said Hans, laughing. "Go on; I like to hear you."

"Often," continued Claude, "in pursuit of a chamois, I have stolen along on its foot-marks dodging it behind rocks, till overtaken by a thick mist which has enabled my game to escape me, I have passed the night under a rock, my wallet has supplied me with a little cheese and oaten bread, frozen so hard that I have been obliged to break them with a stone. In the morning, I have resumed the chase. But even the excitement of a life like this was not enough for me. My mother died, my sister went to live with some relations, and I resolved to be a soldier, and fight beside my father."

"I should have known you had been drilled," cried Mother Agnes, "by the carriage of your head when you got rid of the bag;—but your martial tread, my son, was spoilt by your limp."

"Ah," said Claude, smiling, "I was not in the army long enough to learn much or to do much. The war was just over, my good father died, and I was disabled by an injury to my trigger finger, and allowed a trifling pension. An English

clergyman engaged me as his travelling servant. Before I had been with him long, I would have served him for nothing, so greatly did I become attached to him ! On his death-bed, I told him that when he was gone, I thought I should devote myself to the distribution of the Holy Scriptures. He approved of my resolution, and told me how to commence my task, and where to get a supply of Bibles ; advising me to begin my labours among those from whom I should be unlikely to meet with decided opposition. This I did at first, with great success, in various parts of France and Holland. I met everywhere with the greatest kindness, and held many interesting conversations with those who received me, often reading, praying, and discoursing with them far into the night. They called me the Col-porteur, because I carried my bag slung round my neck. At length I was seized with an intense longing to revisit my native valley, and see how it fared with my only sister, whose name was Françoise, though we commonly called her Fanchette. She had been attached to a young man who was a Roman Catholic ; and, after my mother's death, had gone to reside with some Roman Catholic relatives, who, to my

sorrow, had perverted her to their faith. This had not diminished my affection for her; I undertook a protracted journey to see her; selling Bibles as I went; and at length, having surmounted the pass of the Col de la Croix, I came in sight of my smiling valley, dotted with villages, churches, and rows of poplars. Oh, how beautiful it looked! A man stood gazing down on it in profound thought. On my giving him a traveller's greeting, he turned his large, brown eyes slowly round upon me.—It was my friend Franz.”

“Go on,” said Hans, “you make me work all the better.”

“I found,” continued Claude, “that he had brought his cows up to a patch of rich pasture on the mountain side, and was spending the summer in a little chalet in a cleft of the rock. He gave me milk, rye-bread, and delicious honey, and made many inquiries as to where I had been, and how I had been living. I found he had married, and was the father of two children, whom he had left with his wife in the valley below. When I asked of him news of my sister, his face clouded, and for a few moments he was silent and irresolute what to say. ‘Poor Françoise!’ said he at last,

'it was generally supposed that Michael would marry her; however, it proved that his own intentions were quite different, for he became the husband of the only child of a rich farmer. Françoise had too much self-command to shew herself disappointed, but yet Suzette and I noticed that her cheek grew paler. But, my good friend, nothing can pain her any more. One day, in crossing the goats' bridge, her mule, alarmed at the troubled water beneath, which was carrying along trunks of trees as if they had been straws, threw her into the river, which swept her away before any assistance could be offered. A cross marks the spot where her body was found—my wife often hangs a garland on it.'

"This unexpected calamity so overcame me, that I sat down and wept bitterly. My life seemed suddenly to have lost all its sunshine. Franz comforted me as well as he could, and would have detained me with him; but it was the Sabbath morning, and I was anxious to press forward, and pour out my trouble to God in the little house of prayer where I had expected to sing songs of rejoicing. The grey-headed school-master was already reading the Bible lessons

when I entered the Protestant church, and, with a full heart, sat down among people who had known me from infancy. As soon as the good pastor ascended the desk, his eye fell with a kind of uncertain recognition on me; he proceeded calmly with the service, in the midst of which, a man whose face I well recollected approached with a young infant in his arms as a candidate for baptism; wrapped in the pink and silver mantle I had so often admired when a child. Our *barbe*, as we call our minister, was accustomed to adapt his simple and impressive discourses to the times; and on the present occasion, he alluded to the vintage, which was just over. His text was, 'Thou shalt rejoice in all the good things which the Lord hath given thee, thou, and the Levite, *and the stranger that is with thee.*'

" 'Though these latter, dear friends,' said he in conclusion, 'had no vineyards of their own, they rejoiced in the abundance of others; and so should you. Nay, though you should be not only a stranger, but have come to us from afar, with travel-soiled apparel, sunburnt brow, and blistered feet, and, instead of finding a smiling home to welcome you, should come to a desolate hearth and

a turf-covered grave, will not the good Father of all bind up your wounds, and wipe all tears from your eyes? He will, he will, if you will but cast your burthen on him, and say, O God, I am very full of trouble—Comfort me!’

“The good man’s words tore open my soul, and yet healed it. Many a compassionate eye rested on me, and, when the service was ended, many a cordial hand grasped mine or was laid on my shoulder. The good barbe insisted on my dining with him, and I afterwards accompanied him to a village six miles off, where he was engaged to preach in the afternoon. On our way, he questioned me concerning my course of life, and was surprised and pleased to learn what it was. For several weeks I continued in attendance on him while he made his examination progress through the ten sections; sometimes holding his coat for him while he preached in a stable that was overpoweringly hot from the number of people who flocked to hear him. I sold many Bibles; and he advised those who bought them to study them continually. One morning after his thus exhorting them, he exclaimed to me, ‘Hark! they are reading their

Bibles *in the sun!*' What he meant to express, was his pleasure that they were thus employed at a time of day when they might have been attending to their secular affairs.

"From the time I left my beloved valley, accompanied by blessings and good wishes, my real battle of life began. I visited places that as yet sat in darkness; was persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. When they drove me from one city, I passed on to another. Even to my natural taste, change of scene, the excitement of difficulty and danger, intercourse with various characters, and discussions on the highest subjects that can engage the mind, have always been attractive to me; and as for blows, contumely, and opposition, do I not bear them all for Christ? There is, indeed, a bitter-spirited priest, who, incensed at my success, pursues me from place to place either personally or by his emissaries, and much hinders my work; but he is my only great stumbling-block."

Claude ceased; and, for a few minutes there was a deep silence. Mother Agnes then said,—

"You are weary, my son; will you not go to bed?"

"I never retire to rest if I can help it," said Claude, "without praying with and for those who lodge me. Have either of you any objection?"

"I have none," said Hans, giving him his hand.

"Oh, nor I," said Mother Agnes, laying aside the scraps of blue and crimson with which she was dressing the dolls.

Claude first read a short passage from the New Testament; then, kneeling down, in which example he was followed by his two companions, he offered up a short, plain, and hearty prayer.

"I have been taking up your time terribly with my long story," said he.

"Oh, that's no matter," said Hans, "I've been working, the chief of the time, and you have made the evening fly swiftly. I have yet more work to do, if I had the mind to do it; but somehow, your story and prayer have made me sick of these toys, and I think I'll e'en turn in."

"I shall sit up till I have dressed the last," said Mother Agnes, smiling; "Claude is a good fellow, I am sure of it, I saw it in his face from the first; but neither his story nor his prayer

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have made a bit of difference in me. I'm as good a Catholic this minute as ever I was."

Then she shewed Claude his little chamber, with a crucifix hanging over the clean straw bed with its gay coverlet.

"You'll be selling your books in the town to-morrow?" said she.

"Yes. And you your images?"

"Yes. There are good people, I hope, of all sorts. The world is wide enough for us both. Good night."

Hans had already gone to bed; so his mother finished her work in the kitchen alone. Just as she was biting off her last thread, she heard an uncertain sort of tap at the outer door. She opened it, and there, confronting her, stood a man of very unprepossessing countenance.

"Is there a person here named Malan?" said he.

"No, that's not our name," said Mother Agnes, shutting the door upon him.

"But have you no guest or lodger of that name?" persisted he, putting his foot in.

"We don't take lodgers, and I never heard the name before," said she.

“ Well ; there’s a fellow of that name, somewhere about, that I can’t find,” said the other. “ He’s no very safe customer.”

“ There are a good many unsafe customers about to-night,” said Mother Agnes, “ and we’re very cautious who we let in. So, as I’m to be afoot early, you’ll excuse my locking up at once.” And she closed the door in his face.

—“ Though I’ve never *heard* the name of Malan before,” thought she, “ I can guess who is a likely person to own it !”





CHAPTER IV.

THE SAINT'S DAY MORNING.

EARLY as Claude was astir, his kind hosts were yet earlier. Mother Agnes did not forget, in the interest of brushing her blue cloth jacket and arranging her clean striped handkerchief, the care of seeing to his splinter, which, in the clear morning light, she was well able to draw out. Having chewed certain herbs, after the approved fashion of old-lady herbalists, and laid them on the wound, she covered it neatly with a minute fraction of lawn, and pronounced him to be now in safe walking condition.

“Is your name Malan?” said she.

“It is,” said Claude, with surprise; “but how did you find it out?”

"Oh," said she, with a roguish look, "we good Catholics have ways and means of knowing things that you poor, benighted heretics would never guess."

"I suppose my old foe has been leaving his card of inquiry," said Claude, amused, though provoked. "Is that it?"

"The very thing," said Mother Agnes; "he knocked at the door last night, just as you were in bed, and warned me against you as a dangerous sort of gentleman. He has an ill look—If I were you, I would not have much to say to him."

"*Much* to say? I don't want to have anything to say to him!" cried Claude. "I only wish he would have nothing to say to *me*."

"Rely on it, he thinks he is doing God service," said she, "by hunting you down."

"Ah, my good mother! and suppose he does think so! Can a persecuting creed be the true one?"

"Well, get up now, and come to our coffee-breakfast," said she, "for it may very likely stand you as well as ourselves in stead of a dinner. We have a busy day before us."

Claude, being left to himself, kneeled down,

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and was about to pray, when he was startled by hearing Lisa in the adjoining chamber, engaged in the same act, though to a very different object. He was unable to help hearing the following :—

“ I bless you perpetually, O glorious St. Anne ! and by the joy which you felt in tending the most pure babe Mary, your daughter, I implore you to entreat of the same our Lady her most efficacious protection, that I be not deceived by the cunning of the infernal enemy, nor betrayed into any criminal act, however small.

“ I propose to do all in my power to promote your glory, and do the utmost that I can, that you may be revered and loved. Deign to receive me into the number of your servants ; make me amend my life, and imitate those virtues by which you were so pleasing to the Divine eyes.

“ Come, most compassionate mother ! together with your most delightful daughter ! to my aid and defence when I shall be presented at the Divine tribunal, to be judged for all the years and days of my life. Deliver me from that horrible sentence, and from the eternal pains of hell, that I have so many times deserved. Amen.”

“So!” thought Claude within himself, “she is placing herself yet one step farther off from the mercy-seat,—invoking the intercessor with the intercessor with yet another intercessor! applying to the mother of the mother of the Son of the Father, when she might go straight to the merciful Father himself, of whom Jesus said, ‘In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.’” And he prayed all the more fervently, though not audibly, for the kind people who were sheltering him.

On entering the kitchen, he found every one busy. Lisa, who had bestowed an extra hour’s care on her beautiful hair, had already woven her ivy wreath, and was placing that and her white lily with her brothers’ garlands, in a light rushen basket. The little boys were scalding their mouths by drinking their coffee too hot, in their hurry to set forth; and Mother Agnes, in her care to provide for every one’s breakfast, was not losing sight of her own. Hans, the quietest of the party, was packing her somewhat cumbersome freight of images.

“Ram it in any way,” said his mother rather

impatiently, as he tried to force down an obstinate little wooden leg, that would protrude itself.

"That would be very irreverent treatment of the toe of a saint," said Hans. "Surely, mother, even the Pope's toe would deserve more consideration than that!"

Mother Agnes had been too long used to hear such speeches as this from Hans to be much scandalized at it: she only gave him a little shove, and said, "You are more loth to damage your own handiwork, you scoffer, than to affront a saint. But come! it is time you should lock us out, since you will persist in keeping the house to-day. Nobody would run away with it, I fancy, if you would be sociable and come with us."

"Ah, do, father!" cried the two youngsters, clinging to his skirts.

"We should enjoy ourselves twice as much," pleaded Lisa.

"You would have the pleasure of seeing Lisa as one of the holy maidens, with her white lily," pursued Mother Agnes.

"Off with you all!" cried Hans, good-humouredly pushing them from him. "What fun would it be to me, do you think, to be jostled

among a crowd of gaping, perspiring people, to stare at a rout of red-faced priests, in red, white, and purple, followed by herds of devotees, mumbling over their rosaries?"

"Ah, well, if you are going to talk like that, father, the sooner we are off the better," said Lisa. "You might as well have had a holiday with the rest of us."

"I am going to have a holiday," returned Hans. "I am going to read my new book when I have packed you all off."

Lisa jerked her chin, shook her head reproachfully at him, and went forth.

"And remember, my good friend," said Claude, pressing his hand, "that Jesus has power to come in to his disciples *when the doors are shut*. May he come to you when we are all gone, and enable you to understand what you read. Then you will have no reason to regret having sheltered the poor colporteur."

"Shall we not see you again?" said Hans, returning his friendly grasp.

"Not unless God's providence overrules my own purposes."

"Well,—His blessing be with you!"

“And with you and yours! I shall not forget your kindness. Farewell!”

The little boys had run on to their sister, who was already considerably in advance. Mother Agnes shouldered her burthen and trudged after them, followed by Claude. Hans looked after them for a few moments, and then locked himself in. He cleared away the breakfast, made all tidy, and then taking up his book, with the air of a man about to enjoy himself at leisure, was going to open it, when, suddenly pausing, he knelt down, clasped his hands, and uttered mentally a few words of hearty prayer. It was one of those impulses which, in aftertimes, we look back upon and distinctly recognise as proceeding from the Holy Spirit. Then he took up his book.

Claude and Mother Agnes chatted as they went, more frankly than as if their acquaintance had been so recent, yet more carelessly than as though they were so soon to part. Though they stepped out briskly, the light-footed Lisa managed to keep ahead; but presently Max, her youngest brother, looked round, and ran back to Claude, familiarly taking his hand and saying,—

“My father told us, you strange man, that you

had been a chamois hunter. Will you tell me some stories about hunting?"

"Willingly," said Claude, who soon nailed his new little ally by the ears. Quentin next fell off to him, and they trudged on, one on each side of the colporteur, greedily swallowing his tales of Alpine perils and hairbreadth escapes, only filling up the pauses by eager questions and entreaties for more. They gradually gained on Lisa, and at length were close behind her; and though she still kept aloof, there could be no doubt that she heard every word that was said.

"Why, there's the town!" cried Quentin, at last; "I never knew the road to it seem so short! That's owing to *you*, master," giving Claude's sleeve a commendatory pluck.

"I suppose," said Lisa, abruptly, "you are not going to set up your wares right over-against my grandmother?"

"Oh, no! her post will be close to the church—mine among the lanes and by-ways."

"'Lurking in the thievish corners of the streets,'" said Lisa ironically.

"That's not over-polite, sister," observed Quentin; and in his sweet chorister's voice he

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began to chant,—“ ‘ *Sedet in insidiis cum divitibus in occultis, ut interficiat innocentem.* ’ ”

“ Well, I meant no harm,” said Lisa, rather ashamed. “ I only hoped he would not spoil granny’s market.”

“ That would be ungrateful, after her kindness to me,” said Claude. “ The town is wide enough for us both.”

“ Here, then, we had better part,” said Lisa, stopping short where two roads met. “ That way will suit you as well as any other.”

“ Quite,” said Claude. “ Farewell, my good friends. May God’s grace descend on you and abide with you ! ”

“ The same with you,” said Mother Agnes; and they parted.

The town was all life and commotion. Bells were clanging from church steeples, flags flying, and draperies floating from windows and balconies; streets were converted into leafy alleys, with sweet faces glancing and sweet voices echoing through them; shop-shutters were universally put up, and substantial tradespeople were pouring forth in holiday attire to mix with the fresh-looking peasantry flocking in from the country. Mingled

with these were crowds of less fresh-looking pilgrims, who had arrived overnight, and had passed the intervening hours, none but themselves could tell where or how. Now and then, a gay equipage constrained the dense masses to compress themselves yet closer : then a lumbering waggon would appear, pranked in ribbons and garlands, and containing a patriarchal establishment. Here and there foreigners might be seen, attracted by curiosity ; while everywhere, mingling with the rest, were clean-shaven priests and dirty monks and friars of all orders, jumbled together in a strange medley.

“ That’s the young lady who said we sang like angels,” whispered Max to his sister, plucking her gown. Lisa looked round, and saw a party of English travellers issuing on foot from an inn. It consisted of a gentleman of about five and forty, whose countenance betokened sense and kindness, with a blooming girl on each arm, and followed by an unmistakeable English footman in plain, rich livery.

“ They are milords, those are,” said Quentin with some eagerness, as the party mingled with the crowd.

"Nonsense, child," said Lisa, "ladies are never called milords."

"What then?" said Quentin.

"Mamzelles," said Lisa at a venture; and at the same moment they reached the door of the acquaintance where she and the children were to change their dresses, and where Mother Agnes obtained the loan of a stool, and a light table for her counter. Quentin carried them for her to the spot she selected, which was close to the church-wall, in an angle formed by a buttress; and here, with her eyes shaded as yet from the sun by the church itself, and her wares carefully arranged before her, Mother Agnes sat down, extremely cheerful and comfortable, to gaze on the shifting scene till her busy time came on.

The little boys having speedily equipped themselves in their albs and garlands, set off to join their brother choristers, without troubling the little cracked looking-glass with a single inspection of themselves. Indeed, Lisa could not spare it, but monopolised it for a considerable time, being very difficult to please with her appearance this morning.

At length the last fold was settled, the last look

taken ; and with her tall white lily in her hand, she sallied forth from the quaintly carved old porch with a mixture of bashfulness and self-complacence that was very greatly admired by an Irish artist who happened to be just then passing, sketch-book in hand, on the look-out for the picturesque. In fact, with her white robes, white lily, and girlish, blushing face, thrown into strong relief by the dark background of the doorway, she *did* just then look, to a casual observer,

“ A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament.”

And yet those who were familiar with Lisa might have plainly seen that she did not in reality appear to nearly so much advantage in her white muslin gown as in her accustomed cotton jacket and red petticoat. Firstly, because nothing is so trying to a person who is unaccustomed to good society as a white gown ; which generally occasions their feeling and looking awkward and over-dressed in it ; secondly, because it did not fit particularly well, but was rather baggy about the bust, and longer in the skirt than she was used to ; the unfortunate consequence of which was, that before the day was out she put her foot through it.

Now she makes her way through the crowd to join the chorus of virgins. Now she drops her modest eyes before the keen, fierce glance of a commanding looking priest who is elbowing his way in the same direction. He is a man of about forty; the upper part of his face is decidedly handsome, the brow intellectual, the eye piercing, the nose finely chiselled—the full, red lip—ah, now we come to the worse part of his face. There is something defiant, repelling, unpleasing in his countenance; and yet he is a fine figure of a man, fit for a Knight Templar or a Knight of St. John.

His eye, after momentarily surveying Lisa, is caught by that of an exceedingly ill-favoured, seedy-looking friar. Immediately he makes his way up to him, and with a sort of telegraphic salutation, accosts him in an under-tone.

“Have you followed him?” says the priest.

“No,” says the friar, “I have lost the scent. I had him in my eye up to the village where we dined.”

“Badly managed,” said the other. “While you were dining, he made off. For once in your fat life you might have dined at supper, after tracking him to his lair.”

"Once in my life?" repeated the friar, in the tone of an injured man; "Do Wednesdays and Fridays, then, count for nothing?"

"Why, you dine on Wednesdays and Fridays too, you sinner," rejoined the priest in a still lower tone, "only on fish instead of flesh, and with plenty of beer to wash it down. That beer is the disgrace and curse of you stultified Germans!"

"That is very fine for a man to say who can drink wine when he likes," retorted the friar. "I have a weak stomach, and cold water does not agree with it. As Erasmus the half-heretic said, my digestion is Lutheran, but my appetite is Catholic."

"Liken yourself to such a Janus if you will," said the priest contemptuously, "so that you recover the scent. I am sure he is in the town."

. And he proceeded on his way.



CHAPTER V.

CLAUDE IN THE CITY.

WHEN Claude parted from his companions, he found himself in a suburb comprising a few good houses, but chiefly made up of inferior dwellings, nearly all of which were either already locked up, or casting forth a strange medley of pilgrims and strangers who had lodged in them the preceding night. Among these he was very unlikely to find customers, nor did he notice a single person engaged in the ordinary business of life, except a baker's boy, who seemed very anxious to get rid of his steaming loaves as soon as possible. Claude pursued his way, and soon found himself within the gates, in one of the inferior streets, which, like the suburb he had left, appeared almost forsaken by its usual occupants.

From the door of a house of rather a superior class to the rest, however, was issuing a gaily-dressed party, consisting of three ladies, neither young nor old, an elderly martinet sort of gentleman, and a tall boy. These all chattered as they hurried by, evidently on the all-absorbing subject of the festival, to which they were hastening. Claude's attention, however, was withdrawn from them to a girl, apparently a maid of all work, who had accompanied them to the door, and who, after seeing them off and casting an eager look up and down the street, turned into the house, leaving the door wide open behind her; then, throwing her apron over her face, she began to cry, in great loud sobs, just like a child. She was of the regular Flemish build, coarse-featured, red-elbowed, thick-waisted, large-fisted, heavy-footed; corporeal and unattractive as a homely German drudge could well be; nevertheless, the kind-hearted colporteur felt some pity for her.

He paused at the open door, and tapped on it with his knuckle. She pulled her apron from her face.

'Who are you? and what is it you want?' said she, smearing away her tears.

"I would ask, do you want anything in my way," said Claude, "only that you seem in trouble."

"Trouble, indeed!" repeated she passionately, "who has a right to be in trouble, I wonder, if I have not, when every soul in the house but me is gone to see the procession?—except Mrs. Amelia, who fancies herself ill, and so I must be left behind to look after her, forsooth, which is more than her own sisters will do. I don't believe she has a bit the matter with her except low spirits and peevishness, though *she* will have it she has a mortal complaint, and that no one will have pity on her. I'm sure gentlefolks have an easy time of it when they're ill, eating what they like, and as much of it and as often as they like, and ordering their servants about as if they were not flesh and blood like themselves! If you but knew the buckets of water I have to carry up that great staircase, day after day, to say nothing of anything else.—I shall burst something, some of these days, *I* know."

Your stay-lace, perhaps, thought Claude; but he said, "Did you ever hear of Cinderella, my good girl?"

“To be sure I have,” cried she, looking a little brighter, “and how they all left her at home, and went away to enjoy themselves; and she sat down and cried, till a little old fairy came, and gave her a fine coach and six, and turned her into a grand lady. But you are not an old fairy, I think. Have you got a pumpkin in that leathern bag?”

“No; I carry wares a great deal more valuable,” said Claude, “things that may prove better worth your having than a coach and six, with running footmen.”

“Are you a pedlar?” cried she. “Come in, come in! It will kill time to look at your pretty things, even though I’ve no money to buy any of them. But stay! Mrs. Amelia has money. I’ll run up to her, and persuade her to see your things. Then, maybe, she’ll buy something for herself and for me too!”

And with more vigour than grace she sprang up the great oak staircase, clearing two steps at a time, without any apparent fear lest anything should burst.

Claude swung his bag round from his back to

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his breast. He felt a presentiment that he should meet with a customer.

Presently the girl called out from the landing, "Come up, come up, pedlar! Mrs. Amelia will see you. And just shut the house-door before you leave it."

Claude obeyed instructions, and having mounted the staircase to the first floor, was ushered into a lofty though moderate-sized apartment looking into the street. There was a good deal of old-fashioned wainscotting and carving about it, but the furniture was modern. The curtains were of pale green, with under-curtains of flowered muslin; the carpet was green, and the warm summer sunbeams were softened by Venetian blinds. This glow-worm light gave a hue of additional ashiness to the waxen countenance and hands of a lady no longer young, who reclined on a couch facing the window. She was wan and wasted, with an air of inexpressible lassitude and depression in her face and mien. She was draped in soft white muslin, and a delicately fine cambric handkerchief lay in one of her faded hands, while the other listlessly held a newspaper. A faint

perfume of ether pervaded the atmosphere, though there were fresh roses and lilies on the mantel piece.

"Bid the man come forward, Barbara," said the lady in a weak voice, "or he will not hear one word that I say. Well, my good man, what have you to sell?"

"Books, madam," replied Claude.

"Books!" repeated Barbara, with falling countenance.

"Books!" repeated Mrs. Amelia with more animation. "Well, turn them out, and let us see what you have. Any good new novels?"

"Oh no, madam; they are all religious."

"I have plenty of that class already," said she coldly. "No, do not unpack them; I will have trouble you. Or stay; perhaps you may not something suitable for Barbara. She deserves a little present, poor girl, for she runs about a good deal for me in the course of the day. Have you anything calculated for the lower orders?"

"Oh yes, madam, and for the higher orders too." And he opened a small Bible and held it towards her.

"Oh," said she, peevishly averting her head,

"I can't read one word of such small print as that; the letters dance before my eyes."

"Here is a better type," said Claude, opening another edition, with promptitude but intention, at a given place. "Be good enough to compare the two together,"—and he held the books towards her, indicating the same passage in both with his finger, and regarding her earnestly. She read a few words; a faint colour tinted her face; and, turning her head aside, she began to shed tears.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burthen is light!"

"I have seen that dear book long before," said she, "long, long ago, when I was less in need of it—I know what it is. Here, give it me." And opening her purse, she took out money and gave it him.

"Here is too much," said Claude.


"Give the smaller copy to Barbara."

"But that is cheaper. I must still give you change, madam."

"Give one of your precious books to the next person you fall in with, who needs one and cannot afford to buy one. Whence come you, good man?"

And they fell into conversation, which not only beguiled the time to the poor lady, but led to what seemed like the pouring in of oil and wine to her poor lacerated heart. Barbara, meanwhile, with stolid countenance, and eyes fixed on the opposite house, shifted from one foot to the other; and, poising her present in her hands, seemed estimating it by its avoirdupois weight. After administering much of that counsel and comfort which a strong Christian can impart to a weak one, Claude departed, leaving a gleam of sunshine behind him such as seldom visited that shady room.

The next house he tried, and the next, and the next, were empty. Then he came to an old woman who could not read, scraping a carrot, and watching a rickety child in a go-cart. Then to an artizan, who hailed him with glee when he heard he had books, till he found they comprised neither novels nor ballads. Then to another mechanic, who took a small-type copy with a



grim smile, because he knew the Bible was prohibited. Having left this man, Claude found himself at the corner of a street, at the end of which he caught a bird's-eye view of the procession,—priests, monks, banners, crosses, boys in albs, girls crowned with flowers, pilgrims, relics, the far-famed image of the Virgin! Yes, all this theatrical effect and bewildering pageantry were in honour of that clumsily carven little block of worm-eaten wood!

"What do you think of that, John?" said the English traveller already spoken of, addressing his man-servant over his shoulder.

"I think, my Lord," said John, touching his hat, "that if that there image had fell down from heaven it would most likely have been a pretty deal better made."

"And *I* think, papa," said one of the girls, "that it is like a bad copy of the black Virgin of Liesse."

"All the more likely to be authentic, then, they would tell you," said her father smiling; "if the likenesses agree they would assume that they were taken from a common original."

"Ah, then what would become of all the other

Virgins we have seen," said the young lady, "which have the reputation of being equally authentic, but have no likeness in common?"

Claude, meanwhile, had caught a glimpse of Lisa and her lily, and thought she looked lovely. He turned away with a sigh, repeating to himself, "'Eyes have they, and see not; ears have they, and hear not. . . . They that make them are like unto them, and such are all they that put their trust in them.'"

The next door he knocked at was opened by a poor woman with a face full of anxiety. She said, "I was in hopes you were some one I knew, that I might send you for the doctor. My poor child is so ill!—and I dare not leave him."

"I will fetch the doctor," said Claude, "if you will direct me where to find him. Who is he?"

"Dr. Bauer, at the corner of the street of the Three Kings," said the woman; "tell him Margaret Müller wants him; I'll take care of your bag till you return. Or stay; perhaps you do not want to return this way?"

"Never mind," said Claude, "I shall run the lighter without it;" and having obtained a defi-

nite direction to the unknown street, he laid his bag on the table, with a sample copy on the top of it, and hastened on his errand.

Almost every one was now in church. Dr. Bauer's house was at some distance from Margaret Müller's, and when Claude at length reached it, he saw the doctor just descending his steps, with a flower in his button-hole, and drawing on a pair of new gloves with the air of a man who, having got through his morning round, has a right to enjoy the fag-end of a festival if he can. His expression changed a little when Claude accosted him; but being a truly good-natured man, he immediately gave up his pleasure-scheme, and turned about to visit the sick child.

"Quite a city of the dead, hereabouts," said he to Claude, as they traversed the deserted streets. "No longer even the hum of many voices in the distance. Have you had a peep at the show?"

"Barely," said Claude.

"For me, I rarely get a treat of any kind," said the doctor. "Some case is sure to occur. Now and then, of an afternoon, I walk into the

theatre and see a comedy; and I should have liked to hear the music to-day, as the service is particularly fine; but I don't care for the tomfoolery. Flags, incense, old men and young maidens! Bah!—Besides, the good saint interferes with my practice.—Half the complaints I am called in for are nervous; and these are precisely of the class that yields most readily to miraculous intervention."

"Ah! those were not the complaints our Lord used to cure," said Claude.

"Hey? who? Oh, Jesus Christ!—No! his were of rather a different sort! There's no knowing even of cures like those, however, how many might be referable to natural causes. New discoveries are made every day."

"You are a materialist perhaps, sir," said Claude.

"And what if I am?" said the doctor quietly.

"I know, sir, that many of your benevolent profession are so. Strange it seems to me, that your close and intelligent examination of the mysteries of Divine wisdom should induce you to stop at second causes instead of proceeding to the first!"

The doctor smiled without replying.

"You are a reading man, I presume," said he, after they had walked some minutes in silence.

"Chiefly the reader of one book," said Claude.

"The man to be feared is the man of one book," said Dr. Bauer.

"So my master used to say, though he had read many," observed Claude.

"Who was your master?" inquired the doctor.

"An English clergyman, sir, the Reverend George Herbert. I was his travelling servant."

"Soho! You have seen the world!"

"Oh no, sir! Only a few countries."

"And are you in service now?"

"Yes, indeed, sir. To the best of masters."

"And who is he?"

"God!"

The doctor fairly started. He eyed Claude sharply, raised his eyebrows a little, and smiled.

"You are a character, I perceive," said he. "*Une tête exaltée*. I understand you exactly. You profess singularity, and like to say startling things."

"Would to God, sir, I were not singular! I

wish, as St. Paul said, that others were both almost and altogether such as I am, except. . .”

“Except what?”

“Except the bonds of natural infirmity.”

“I don’t remember St. Paul saying that.”

“No, sir, he simply said, ‘Except these bonds.’”

“I mean, I don’t recollect ever to have heard the speech you allude to.”

“Indeed, sir? And yet,—pardon me for repeating to you your own question to me,—are you not a reading man?”

“I believe so,” said the doctor dryly; “I have sucked the marrow out of the libraries of more than one university.”

“And yet, having penetrated into all mysteries and all knowledge, have you never perused the Acts of the Apostles? To a gentleman of your intelligence, sir, I should have thought the history, character, and genius of St. Paul would have been peculiarly interesting.”

“So then,” cried Dr. Bauer, “your one book turns out to be the Acts of the Apostles!”

“No, sir, the Bible. But here we are at Margaret Müller’s.”

The door stood ajar. The mother was sitting beside her sick child's cradle, but with a totally altered countenance. Every furrow had disappeared, and given place to a mild, serious composure. The child was quietly asleep; the mother attentively reading Claude's specimen volume. Her eye was on the verse, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort thee."

Her face lighted up with a smile of thankfulness when she saw the doctor, and she bestowed a look of gratitude on Claude.

"Bless you, bless you, good friend," said she to him, returning to him his bag of books, "I thank you heartily for your kindness; and," lowering her voice, "for the comfort my dip into your book has given me."

"Keep it," said Claude, putting it back; "I had the means afforded me of giving it to the first person I should meet, who needed it without being able to pay for it. You appear to be that person. God's grace be on you! Farewell."

She gave him a hasty but most eloquent look of thanks, and followed Dr. Bauer to the child's cradle.

When Claude re-entered the street, a black dog

ran out of a house a few doors off, looked right and left, and, running up to him, looked wistfully in his face, whined, returned to the house, and looked out again to see if he were following.

“That is a call for help, as plain as a dumb beast can make it,” thought Claude ; and he followed the dog into the house, and up the dirty stairs of what seemed a lodging-house. On reaching the attic he found a man, apparently in a swoon, on a miserable pallet, surrounded by canvasses, casts, painting-implements, and all the litter of an artist’s studio.

“This is a case for Dr. Bauer,” thought Claude ; “how lucky he should be at hand !” And he immediately returned to seek him at Margaret Müller’s.”



CHAPTER VI.

THE SAINT'S DAY AFTERNOON.

"THE case is one of pure exhaustion," said Dr. Bauer, bending over the artist. "Fetch some brandy."

"From whom?" said Claude.

"From Margaret Müller."

Claude obeyed without a word, and the physician poured a little through the exhausted man's lips. Presently he opened his eyes, with an uncertain, wistful look.

"Here still?" sighed he; "I was in hopes all had been over."

"That was a very ungrateful hope of yours," rejoined Dr. Bauer, cheerfully, "when we have had so much trouble in keeping body and soul together for you."

“Who are you?” said the artist, feebly.

“I am Dr. Bauer, the physician—your physician—everybody’s physician; and I don’t mean to lose sight of you till I have set you on your legs again. My companion must answer for himself; I only know that he seems an’ eccentric, benevolent fellow, and perhaps you think that is all you know of *me*.”

“And all I need to know, just now,” said the artist, feebly pressing his hand. “God bless you for your kindness!”

“Tell me, my friend, how came you in this state to be left all alone?”

“My friends are far off—my money is gone. The people of the house are kind, but I have concealed my want from them. They knew I was ill, but not how ill.”

“And they have all run after the show, of course. I shall rail against these pageants as long as I live—they make people fools; selfish fools. Well, my good friend, I shall send you something as soon as I get home; but it will be out of the kitchen. In the evening I shall look in on you again, and make out a little more of your case. You are an artist, I see—perhaps,

when you get about again, you may accept a commission for a little picture ; though I am a very humble Mecænas. Meantime, farewell ; this companion of mine will, I hope, stay with you till the people of the house return."

"They are coming in now," said Claude, look-over the stair-head ; and the mistress of the house, seeing a strange man beckoning to her, came up, looking rather surprised.

Dr. Bauer, who knew her by sight, gave her to understand that her lodger wanted looking after ; and after giving a few simple directions, to which she promised to attend, he left the house, followed by Claude.

" Shall we cross each other's paths any more, I wonder ?" said the doctor, smiling.

" Indeed, sir, I know not. It was fortunate for the poor artist that I knew you were at hand."

" Do you know anything of him ?"

" Oh no, sir, I am quite a stranger here. I am only a colporteur."

" A what ?"

" A hawker of the books I carry round my neck."

" Oh ! religious books, doubtless."

" Bibles, sir."

" Ha !—I remember, now, what you said of your one book, You have tried your own prescription, then ; which most quacksalvers do not."

" I am a soul-salver, sir ; as far as it pleases God to bless so humble an instrument."

" Still, a quack, nevertheless ; one without ordination, or diploma. Your wares are contraband,—you must take care you don't get into trouble."

" It will not be the first time, sir. I neither court danger nor shun it."

" Hum !—you are a curious fellow. The service is over, I see ; the people are pouring out of church. Next, they will be eating and drinking at the coffee-houses and beer-shops, and then they will be off to the miracle-play. With their heads so full of church mummeries, you will find yourself, my good fellow,—what we shall both be doing in another sense the next minute,—fighting against the stream."

" Give me your good wishes, sir, that I may not be borne down it."



" Well,—I will—I do! There is something about you that pleases me. Farewell. You have not asked me to buy one of your books."

" Would to heaven, sir, you would—and read it!"

" Well, I will do both. Give me a copy. Be quick!"

The purchase was rapidly made; the Bible dropped into the doctor's capacious pocket, the price of it transferred to the little leathern purse Claude carried in his bosom; and the farewell was once more spoken, with kindness on one side, and respectful earnestness on the other.

The next moment, Claude found himself involved in the living torrent. He stood aside for a minute or two, to give it free course. Before him were some foreigners in a similar position; and, closely jammed between them and him, a pickpocket, whom Claude caught in the fact of abstracting a gentleman's pocket handkerchief.

" Replace it!" said he, in a low voice, laying his hand strongly on his shoulder. The thief started from head to foot.

" Restore it," pursued Claude, still under his

breath, "or I give you into the hands of justice. What portion has the thief in the kingdom of heaven?"

The man replaced the handkerchief, suddenly released his shoulder from Claude's hand, and, the next moment, was gone. The crowd thinning a little, Claude moved on. Presently he felt some one plucking at his bag, but the strap and buckle were too strong to give way. Afterwards, he thought he felt a twitch at his pocket, but he knew the utmost he could lose was a cotton handkerchief.

He had now won his way to the low wall and iron railing adjoining the church; and finding a convenient ledge on which to rest himself and his books, he quietly awaited the dispersion of the crowd. He observed several persons carrying the little figures sold by Mother Agnes, and surmised that her wares were more in request just now than his were likely to be.

One of these dolls had been bought as a curiosity by John Perry, the English footman, who was now sight-seeing on his own account. He was surveying it from top to toe with an amused air, when Claude, recognising him for a John

Bull, said quietly in English, "Take care of your pockets!"

—"The second time you have foiled me!" cried the thief in a rage, as John Perry, clapping his hand on his pocket, saved his handkerchief; and the disappointed man aimed a blow at Claude's temple, which John Perry's arm intercepted. With a look of concentrated malice, he disappeared in the crowd.

"So you speak English, do you?" said John to Claude, familiarly. "You don't look English, though,—you're swarthy, not ruddy."

"I am Swiss."

"Been in English service, perhaps?"

"Yes: travelling servant."

"Who with?"

"The Reverend George Herbert."

"I'm with Lord Coldingham. What are you doing now?"

"Selling Bibles. *You* don't want one, I suppose?"

"I should think not!—A pretty story to tell of one of Lord Coldingham's servants!—No; I've three: two at home, and one here. Folio pictorial, quarto large print, and travelling pocket.

What jolly fools the people are making themselves here, to-day!"

"It is well they do not understand what you are saying. They have had no means of knowing better. That is their misfortune, not their fault. Hark! they are cheering. Something is going on in the church."

"A miracle! a miracle!" was echoed from mouth to mouth.

—"The bishop's niece"—"two years a cripple"—"healed in a moment"—"miraculous spring"—"merciful intervention of our Lady"—"power of faith!"—were the fragments of speech heard passing among the crowd.

"See, there's the bishop's carriage drawing up for her!" cried John Perry, climbing up the rails to look over the heads of the excited throng; "I saw her carried in—I shall like to see her walk out.—Propped up between two footmen, as I'm alive!—Ah!—"

And he gave a tremendous groan of irony and disgust, which, luckily for him, was drowned in the plaudits of true believers. The carriage whirled past, the lady in feathers and jewels, bowing to the populace through the plate-glass.

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“ ‘ Rich and rare were the gems she wore ! ’ ”
hummed John Perry. “ And *that* they dare call
a miracle! Oh my!”

After the crowd had rushed past, “ Well,” said
he, “ hungry time is at hand. I shall step into
that coffee shop opposite, and get some bread and
cheese. Will you come too? I’ll stand treat.
‘ C’est plaisant de rencontrer un ami,’ as we say
in French.”

“ Many thanks,” said Claude, “ but I have not
earned my dinner yet.”

“ You Swiss are spare feeders,” said John.
“ I’ve heard my Lord say, a ha’porth of bread and
a bunch of raisins would suffice you at any time.
That’s not the way John Bull nourishes his flesh
and muscles. No ; we stand by the ‘ roast-beef-
de-mouton ! ’ ”

“ You seem a linguist,” said Claude.

“ Not much of that,” replied John Perry, evi-
dently flattered ; “ German I can’t frame my
mouth to; but French I got on with pretty well,
as soon as I took to my own way of learning it,
instead of Lord Coldingham’s.”

“ What was his way?” said Claude.

“ Why,” said John, “ he gave me some little

books, one of which was called 'Dialogue Français;' but, bless my heart, there was nothing in the dialogue that I had the least occasion to say, 'Madam, sir, or miss, I am your obedient humble servant.' My Lord and the young ladies knew I was that without my telling 'em, and I ain't nobody else's. 'A vessel of war;' 'I love milk, butter, and cheese;' and suchlike stuff: nothing that would be really useful, such as, 'Look sharp!'—'Mind what you're after!'—'That's mine!'—'Go along!'—'I've nothing for you!' These are the things a fellow wants. The books are too civil by half. Not one of them has anything corresponding to 'I'll blow you all up!' So, as soon as I made this out, by attentively reading the English column, I made up my mind that the author was not a man of the world, and put his book carefully away in whity-brown paper, as a *memento mori* of my Lord, and studied the language by ear. Hence, I speak it like a native."

"You are frequently told so?" said Claude.

"Continually," said John; "I make my way wherever I go: that is, wherever the people understand either of the only two civilized languages on earth, French and English; and I'm of double

the value, in consequence, to my Lord, who has no need of a courier. I must say, the only persons who deride me are those who ought to be the very last, namely, my Lord and the young ladies, to whom I am so useful; but this is only 'poor human nature;' and I've observed in the course of my life, what I dare say you have observed also, that it isn't the foreigners themselves who laugh at you for mauling their language, but your own countrymen and countrywomen, who think they can do better. However, if you will not *manger un petit repas*, I shall; so, good-bye. I shall keep an eye on you through the window."

The street now clearing a little, Claude began to make an unobtrusive demonstration of his business, by silently extending one of his books to such passengers as he judged from their appearance to be likely to become purchasers. Some paused to give the volume a casual examination, and returned it without a word; others stopped, questioned, demurred, chaffered, and went away without buying it, after all. At length, Claude sold a copy; then a long time passed without his having another customer; then his market recommenced; people crowded round him to hear

what he had to say in recommendation of his books ; and at length, his whole stock ran off with the exception of a couple of copies.

These appeared unlikely to be sold, as the people were now hastening in another direction to see the miracle-play. Lord Coldingham, in passing, had a few words of an interesting nature with the colporteur ; but as he also was bound for the green meadow chosen for the theatre, with the purpose of making his observations not only on the play but the audience, he proceeded on his way, after a few cordially expressed wishes of success to his mission.

As the day was now past its meridian, and his business at a stand, Claude thought he might as well refresh himself at the coffee-house. John Perry had long left it, and the public rooms were quite deserted except by a woman who was sweeping them, and of whom Claude bespoke some bread and cheese.

" You will, perhaps, prefer sitting in the open air," said she ; and, at her suggestion, he went through the house to a plot of open ground behind it, where a few benches and tables were set under trees. A party of dirty-looking men were

just moving from one of these tables, where they had been drinking beer : there was no other company, except a young man talking very earnestly to a girl at a table apart. Claude sat down near them, and while waiting for his refreshment, drew one of his Bibles from his bag and began to read. He continued to keep his eye on the page while he ate his bread and cheese ; but occasionally his attention was diverted by his catching a few of the impassioned words uttered in an under-tone by the young man, and by the girl's stifled sobs. He was urging her to some course to which she would not consent ; and at length, with a muttered curse, he arose and went away. The girl remained, shedding tears.

Without raising his eyes from the book, Claude, as if reading aloud, uttered in the mildest tone of compassion, " Woman, why weepest thou ? whom seekest thou ? "

The girl started from head to foot ; but, uncertain whether she were addressed or not, said nothing. Claude, after a single searching look at her, which made her eyes sink before his, pursued in the same tone, " There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. "

The girl relapsed into tears.

"*I* repent," said she softly.

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," said Claude.

"Oh, how I wish I had never come on this pilgrimage," said she. "It was against the known will of my father and mother. What shall I do?"

"Arise, and go to thy father, and say, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy daughter."

"He will be so angry!—"

"He has reason to be angry. But your own course is plain. Your disobedience deserves a sharp punishment, and you must bear his anger meekly, however harshly it may be expressed."

"But, suppose he thinks worse of me than I deserve, and chases me from his door? I have no friend—"

"If you do what is right, and are penitent for having done wrong, God will be your friend."

"I am still more afraid of my mother—"

"Can a mother forget her child? Yea, she may forget, saith the Lord, yet will not I forget thee."

The girl sat in an agony of irresolution.

"I dare not go back!" exclaimed she.

"Then why did not you go with the young man?" said Claude.

"No; I could not!—I had just strength to avoid that; yet, now, I feel so unhappy—I shall never see him again—"

And again she wept.

"That will not be the greatest misfortune that might happen to you."

"Oh, what *can* I do?" wringing her hands.

"Hear this,"—and he read to her the parable of the prodigal son. As she listened, her features became more composed.

"I have half a mind. And yet—"

"Have *quite* a mind."

"What shall I say? If any friend—"

"Where do you come from?"

"From the neighbourhood of Transdorf, on the road to Bonn. My father is a woodman; we don't live in the village."

"I shall probably be pursuing that direction, and may reach your door as soon as you will. Go forward; go bravely: I will come up with you if I can, and will stand by you and intercede

for you. But, should any unforeseen occurrence detain me, still go home, without waiting for the people you came with to rejoin you. What is your name?"

"Jaqueline Schiller. You must turn off at the broken cross, before you reach Transdorf, and when you have crossed two fields, you will see our cottage, which has three linden-trees beside it. . . Oh, if you should fail me!—"

"I will not, God willing. Can you read?"

"Yes, sir."

"Take this book with you, then; and when your heart fails, read a little of it, and then go forward again. I give it you. Courage, Jaqueline! Your whole fate depends on the decision of this hour! Will you go?"

She rose, took the book, and said, "I will go!"



CHAPTER VII.

THE BATTLE OF THE PIGS.

CLAUDE remained for some time in a fit of musing, on rousing himself from which, he resumed his Bible, and occupied himself, according to the continual custom of the Vaudois, in committing a certain portion to memory. The striking of the town clocks at length notified to him that the day was waning; and on looking about him, he saw people at a distance moving in various directions, which led him to conclude that the miracle-play was over, and the audience dispersing. He had no longer any business in the town; his object was to proceed to the Rhine, and avail himself of one of the steam-boats to descend to Rotterdam for a fresh supply of Bibles. His lamed foot, which he had strained

a good deal the day before, was somewhat eased by his late rest; and, having paid his little reckoning, he started briskly on his journey, ready to enjoy it now that the hot sun was declining and the fresh evening air fanning his temples.

In making his way towards the high-road, he had to cross the market-place, where a considerable number of persons had collected round a man who was either haranguing or preaching; his violent action and declamatory tones made it difficult at first to decide which. Claude, impeded by the crowd, paused for a few minutes to hear what he was saying.

“A year and a half ago,” proceeded the speaker, “impressed with a sense of my duty and of your danger, I warned you of these wolves in sheep’s clothing that were creeping into the fold. Wolves, shall I say? nay, rather, devils; who, enraged to behold you advancing in godliness, neglect nothing that is calculated to weaken religious principle in our towns and villages. Not content with doing all they can to undermine the faith of unsuspecting people by their false logic and blasphemous heresy, they seduce

them to purchase detestable books, purporting to be the Holy Scriptures translated into the vulgar tongue, but which have been condemned and anathematized by the Church again and again. I have one of these Bibles now in my hand, which (on this very day of all others!) has been sold to a poor, unwary young fellow, who little knew that he had better have laid hold of a red-hot coal, than have touched the infamous commodity, even if it had been offered to him gratis, instead of at the ridiculously low price which, as a mere blind, the vendor asked for it. See here!—not closely enough, mind you, to enable you to peruse one word of its contents!—but behold from a distance—What paper! What printing! What binding! Could it ever answer to any honest man, I ask you, to supply such an article as this for three florins, in a fair way of trade? To say yes would be absurd. No; there are actors behind the scenes, persons ready to waste good money in the dissemination of bad books; but do not you, faithful and beloved! play into their hands, by purchasing, chaffering, handling, peeping into, or in any wise having anything at all to do with these books or their hawkers. On

the contrary, shun them, chase them, fly at them, fall upon them, maul, maltreat, scatter, and disperse them ! You will be doing good and acceptable service."

Claude, having heard quite enough of this discourse, was quietly endeavouring to make his way through the crowd ; but the pressure had become so dense in consequence of the fresh streams of people pouring in from the miracle-play, that he thought it best not to attract attention too much, by elbowing his neighbours. The heat made him feel for his handkerchief to apply to his face ; and, to his surprise, instead of drawing forth his own red cotton one, he found in his hand a lady's cambric pocket-handkerchief, gaily laced and embroidered. He then remembered having felt a man's hand in his pocket early in the day, and was not a little astonished to find that instead of having his own handkerchief withdrawn, a much handsomer one had been added to it. His attention was diverted from the mystery by hearing one or two voices in the crowd exclaim—

" *We* bought books, father ! What shall we do with them ? "

“ Bring them hither to me, my sons,” replied the friar, “ without delay, and we will make an *auto da fé* of them ! We will dip them in turpentine, and fix them on poles, and set them alight, and carry them all blazing about the streets, as beacons and warnings ; and lucky will it be for the wretched vendor of such inflammable matter if he blaze not in some market-place, himself, soon or late ! ”

“ There goes the fellow that sold me mine ! ” shouted one of Claude’s morning customers,—“ him in the green jacket, that’s stealing off like a fox ! Have at him ! ” And he aimed a stone with such precision as to hit the colporteur violently on the head.

“ At him ! after him ! away with him ! ” cried the preacher, clapping his hands, and hallooing them on as if in chase of some wild beast.

“ My friends,”—began Claude, but a half-bitten apple hit him on the temple. He saw it was no time for remonstrance, but for flight ; and, darting from his pursuers with the fleetness of a hare, he left them in full cry after him. Being far more slender and agile than the majority of those who were giving him chase, he bade fair

to win the race; but his wounded foot soon began to make its infirmities remembered, and whether he would or no, his pace slackened, in spite of the missiles continually sent after him. The crowd being in that excitable condition after a day's pleasure that usually vents itself in peevishness or mischief, were delighted at this outlet for their spirits; heads were popped out of doors and windows to see what was going on, and the tumult momentarily augmented. Claude suddenly darted through a covered way into a back street, and thence crossing into a by-lane, he for a moment escaped his foes, and was beginning to halt on his tender foot, when a fresh cry of "Stop thief! he has stolen the Virgin's pocket-handkerchief!" made him spring forward with renewed impetus.

Quick as lightning it flashed across his mind that the man whose hand he had felt in his pocket that morning, had either for purposes of mischief, or to disembarass himself of dangerous booty, made him the unconscious depository of one of those gay pocket-handkerchiefs with which the various images of Virgins and saints were graced on festivals, as the finishing touch of their

fashionable toilettes. Casting it behind him as a Spanish matador would drop his scarlet flag, he continued his flight, while a yell of execration from behind announced the crowd's detestation of his supposed sacrilege. The chase now becomes a painful one; he dashes on, the foe close at his heels, when suddenly an unexpected force appears in the field. The *Swine-General's* horn is heard in advance; that war-charge proclaims the return of the doughty champion, at the head of all the pigs in the neighbourhood. In another moment, Claude is among the grunters, not hemmed in by them, but clearing them by half-dozens, skimming over their heads with the light vaults of a practised chamois-hunter. The next minute they are entangled among the crowd, running between their legs, upsetting many a clumsy cursing wight, getting their own pettitoes plentifully trodden on, and expressing their sense of the indignity and injury by piercing squeals. Peals of laughter mingle with the uproar of the swinish multitude; the human *canaille* is for a while brought to a stand, and Claude gets ahead; but soon the scent is recovered, and the pack in full cry is once more

at his heels. It is of no use, now, to mind the smarting of his foot ; he is in the suburbs, he has passed them, he is in the open road, in the fields ; he is distancing them, the whoop and halloo become more and more faint ; his mountaineer limbs and lungs have won the race.

But where is he ? In what direction has he been running ? East, west, north, or south ? The sun, flaming as it goes down, tells him that, but he knows no more. He has been running a couple of miles for safety, without a thought whither he is going. All he knows, all he sees, is that he has never crossed the ground before ; that the ditches, fruit-trees, furrows and fallows, corn-fields, vineyards, and apple-orchards, are new to him ; that he is far away from the city and from the high road ; and that he is approaching the back entrance of a large, heavy-built cottage, with milk-pans and pails set out against the wall to dry. Suddenly he is clasped to a man's heart . . . a well-known, cordial voice exclaims, " Come in, thou blessed of the Lord ! " and he finds himself in the arms of Hans.

He had approached the back of his host's cottage by a circuitous course, without knowing

it. Hans, after a day of solitary, intense study and self-communion, which had wrought strange and gracious changes in his inner being, had come to the door, half dizzy with the continuous flood of new light that had been pouring in upon him, to breathe for a few minutes the fresh evening air—had heard the distant shouts, had descried the panting fugitive, and, as he drew nearer and more near, beheld in him, to his surprise and delight, the very man he longed to see, and feared never to see again.

Oh, how fast and vividly and fervently the words flow when the heart and soul give them utterance! In a few minutes, Claude had given Hans a picture of the day's story; in a few more minutes, Hans had given Claude to understand how the great deeps of his spirit had been broken up. The souls of the two men were knit together; they poured them out in prayer, congratulation, and giving of thanks; they fell into yet deeper, more solemn communion, on the loftiest, most thrilling, most important subjects that men can look into; they dived deeper into one and another mystery than they had ever done before—"mysteries through which a lamb may wade, yet in

which an elephant may swim :” they helped one another through ; led one another on ; their hearts burning within them all the time. It was as in those old days when “ They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his name.

“ And they shall be mine, saith the LORD OF Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels ! ”

In the midst of this

“ ——— converse, such as it behoved
Men to have held, and God to have approved,”

Quentin and Max came in ; not overflowing with exuberance of animal life and boyish fun, as on the preceding evening, but tired, worn out, hungry, and cross. Close on their heels followed Mother Agnes, equable and kindly as usual ; she was one of those rare tempers whom nothing can put out ;—and, last of all, drooping and dispirited, the languid Lisa, who had outwalked them all in the morning, and who now, like Cinderella after the ball, had subsided from her finery into her ordinary peasant costume.

All, of course, were taken by surprise when

they saw Claude in his old quarters—the little boys first. Max was fretfully upbraiding Quentin for pulling his ear, when his face suddenly shortened half its length and became expanded into a broad smile at sight of the colporteur.

“Ah, you strange man!”—cried he, springing to him and winding his arms tightly round one of Claude’s, “I thought we should never see you any more! How glad I am you have come back! But why did you say you should go the other way?”

“Claude here?” exclaimed Mother Agnes, pausing astonished at the threshold, “I can hardly believe I see him!”

“I hope you are not sorry to see me, though?” said Claude. “I was chased out of the town like a mad dog.”

“Was it *you* they were making such an uproar about?” cried Mother Agnes in still greater surprise, “I thought they had been pursuing a thief.”

Lisa here came in with her bundle of *properties* under her arm.

“How tired I am!” cried she, dropping into the first seat, “Tired to death!—Oh!—” uttering a little shriek of surprise when she saw Claude.

"You are not sorry to see me again, I hope?" said Claude, in his gentlest accent.

"Well," replied she, peevishly, "I certainly hoped we were going to have the evening to ourselves."

"Lisa! that is an ungracious speech to a valued guest," said her father.

"Valued!" repeated she, slightly curling her lip.

"Yes, valued," replied Hans, with decision.

"But come, you are all worn out—I am the only fresh one among you—I will get supper ready."

"You said you would have it ready for the children, Hans, against their return," observed Mother Agnes, making the nearest approach to a rebuke she was capable of; "and nothing is done—the fire out—the table bare."

—"And the cow not milked, I do believe!" cried Lisa, starting up—"Oh goodness! I hear the poor thing lowing!"

"Let me milk her for you," said Claude, rising with a limp, "I have often milked a whole dairy of twenty cows."

"No, thank you," said Lisa, tartly, "my father promised to do it, and since he has not remembered his promise, I'll milk her myself."

"I quite forgot!" exclaimed Hans, "I am truly sorry!—I entirely forgot it!"

"If one wants a thing done, it is best to do it one's self," cried Lisa, catching up the milking-stool and vanishing as she spoke.

"That girl is quite upset," said Mother Agnes, looking anxiously after her—"I can't think what has come to her this day or two. Dear me, dear me!"

And, without more ado, she set down the unsold portion of her stock in trade, turned up her best skirt and pinned it round her, tied on her coarse apron, and began re-lighting the fire, while Hans, confused at his negligence, was hastily spreading the supper table with every eatable he could find; aided, in a listless, weary way, by Quentin. Max remained couched at Claude's side, stroking Claude's hand, and occasionally applying it to his cheek; and examining him all over, especially his feet.

"This foot is bleeding, you poor man!" cried he, suddenly, "Oh, granny! look!"

"Mercy on us!" said Mother Agnes, desisting from her task to survey the injured member, "why, it's cut through and through!"

"It does not hurt much," said Claude; "not nearly as much as when the splinter was in it yesterday."

"Because the bleeding relieves it," said his humane doctress, "but it is very weakening to lose blood from the foot—I'll attend to it directly, before I kindle another stick—Quentin and Max won't mind waiting a bit for their suppers; will you, dears?"

"Certainly not," said Quentin, "I couldn't touch a morsel while that foot was bleeding so. It makes me feel quite sick."

"It makes Claude feel sick, too, I know!" said little Max, gazing anxiously at his friend—"He's turning quite grey; quite white! Granny! look!"

Claude fainted, as dead as a stone. When he came to his senses, he felt quite confused and all over prickles. Hans was holding him up in his strong arms, Mother Agnes binding up his foot; and Lisa, who had been so testy with him a few minutes ago, was sprinkling cold water on his face, and shedding warm tears.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE LEAVEN WORKING.

LISA'S tears must help to swell the vast oceans of brine the sources of which are unaccounted for and unaccountable; since she was a very unlikely girl to waste such symptoms of weakness merely because a man had badly cut his foot; and as for any more pity for Claude the colporteur than for any wayfarer who begged a cup of skimmed-milk at the dairy-door,—Pish! nonsense! It is not to be supposed for an instant.

The family at length sat down to their late supper; but Claude was not permitted to stir from the rude settle, which answered every purpose of a sofa as far as comfort went; and the little boys—who sat close enough to him to be able

to help him to whatever he wanted without leaving the table—fed and cockered him as daintily as if he had maimed his hands as well as his foot.

Discourse flagged, however. It seemed as if all had their minds too full or their bodies too weary to permit them to utter more than short, unconnected sentences. Moreover, there seemed a prevalent feeling of disappointment or melancholy. The excitement of the miracle-play was over, and the young people had been embarrassed and mortified by one or two blunders and accidents. Mother Agnes had found a good market for about half her stock, but had had her pocket picked of her earnings. While these misadventures were alluded to, one after another, Hans, the only person who was not weary, was the most silent of all, and seemed living in some spirit-world of his own, to judge from the smile of inexpressible sweetness that shone upon his countenance.

They had just concluded their meal, when a tap was heard at the door. Mother Agnes, quick as thought, moved the brass lamp she had just lighted, so as to throw Claude into the shade,

and shifted her own position a little, signing to Hans to do the same, so that they sat between him and the door and nearly concealed him.

The visitant, meanwhile, had raised the latch and walked in without farther ceremony. He was a tall, fresh-looking young German, rather superior to the average as far as colour and features went, though his countenance had little more intellect than one of Hans's dolls, and his figure had about as much shapeliness as a sack-full of flour. That was concealed, indeed, by his blouse, though it could not carry off a certain ungainliness of carriage and roundness of the shoulders.

"Caspar! is it you, lad?" said Hans. "You should have come earlier if you wanted supper, for we have just cleared the dishes."

"Oh, that doesn't signify,—much," said Caspar, whose elocution was not rapid; "I only thought I'd just look in."

"Well, it mustn't be for long, then, my good fellow," said Hans, "for we're just going to shut up."

"Oh, I'll go directly, if you like!" said Caspar, moving to the door.

"No, no, don't take him up like that," interposed Mother Agnes; "Hans only means to say that we are tired, one and all, with our day's work and pleasure, and are longing to be in our beds. That's all he means."

"I didn't see *you* there, master," said Caspar.

"Where?" said Hans.

"Why, in the town," said Caspar.

"No sign I wasn't there, though, Master Caspar! However, the fact is, I kept house. I'm too old for all this nonsense."

"Why, your mother wasn't," said Caspar.

"My mother had her dolls to sell," said Hans.

"*Dolls!*" repeated Caspar.

"Aye, dolls," repeated Hans, recklessly, taking up one of them and toying with it; "what are they else? I fashioned them and painted them."

"*Somebody* fashioned and painted that saint!" said Caspar, pointing to one in a niche, as if he had hit on an unanswerable argument.

"Yes; and I can tell you who he was," said Hans; "Peter Wart, the little bandy-legged fellow that used to live over-against the town-hall. But we're all getting sleepy, Caspar, to-night!—And you don't wake us up much."

"Are *you* sleepy?" said Caspar, sheepishly, to Lisa.

"Very," said Lisa, sighing instead of yawning.

"You wouldn't speak a word to me to-day," said he, lowering his voice.

"I didn't see you," said Lisa, shortly.

"Not *see* me? Oh, Lisa!"—

"Well, if I did, I only just caught sight of your shoulders when you had turned away—there was no good in that, was there?"

"No; only, you knew well enough where I should be."

"*I* knew?"

"Why, I told you!"

"Well, then, I had so many other things to think about, that it was no wonder if I forgot it."

And Lisa yawned, this time, so irrepressibly, that she set all the others yawning too.

"What an odd thing it is," said Mother Agnes, "that when one person yawns, everybody should yawn! Come, Quentin and Max! be off to your bed, dears, or you'll oversleep yourselves to-morrow, and the goose-captain will blow his horn without your hearing him."

"Well, I don't seem wanted," said Caspar,

getting up, and looking wistfully at Lisa. "By the by, there was a funny thing happened this evening . . . Hallo ! why, there's a man !"

"One would think he frightened you," said Lisa, sarcastically.

"A friend of ours, who is not very well," said Mother Agnes. "Why, goodness, Caspar, you are in such a pickle, all up the back of your blouse ! You've been rolling in the mud !"

"All among the pigs," said Caspar, still staring hard towards Claude, whose face he could not see. "You never knew such a bother. There was a man selling wicked books in the town . . . by the by, I came to warn you against him, Lisa."

"Thank you, I never buy wicked books," said Lisa. "I feel the compliment all the same."

—"We were hooting him out of the gates," pursued Caspar, "when up comes the swine-general with all his grunTERS. You never knew such a row in your life. Here and there they were pelting, squealing as if all their noses were being rung at once, upsetting people right and left—me among the rest, who got a porker between my legs. Down I went !—and I fall heavy."

"I should think so," said Hans, bursting out laughing. Lisa laughed too.

"I should think *you* needn't laugh," said Caspar to her, looking hurt.

"Why not?" said Lisa. "I thought you meant us to laugh. Who could help it?"

"Well, I shall be off," said Caspar abruptly, beginning to be sensible, through all his obtuseness, that his presence was unacceptable, "I'm wanted at home. There's a many things," he added, darting a reproachful look at Lisa, "that they think, at home, none can do better than I!"

"Doubtless," said Mother Agnes. "You're an excellent fellow."

"Ah," said he, lumbering towards the door, and looking sidelong at Lisa, "I wish *you'd* said that instead o' she!"

Lisa made no answer.

"Well, good-night to you all," cried Caspar, turning short round when he reached the door.

"Hey! Hallo! Why, that's the very man!"

"What man?" said Hans, annoyed at himself for having shifted his position just an instant too soon.

"Why, the man that sold the wicked books,"

said Caspar, fixing his round blue eyes immovably on the colporteur. (The Germans have a remarkable gift of staring.)

"You silly fellow! they weren't wicked," said Hans. "Why, I bought one myself."

"Oh, did you so?" said Caspar, slowly moving off, but still keeping his eyes, which began to have something of malice in them, on Claude; "You've got one of those books, have you, Master Hans, that we've been dipping in turpentine and carrying round the town on a pole? *You'd better not, though!* . . . I'm a silly fellow, am I? Well, maybe I am, though they that are at home don't think me so! Good night."

"Stay!" cried Claude, as he went forth.

"Let him alone," said Lisa; "he grows more tiresome every day, I think. I am quite glad he is gone."

"But I am sorry he has gone in an unfriendly mood," said Claude,—*"I would have set him right in two words."*

"Pshaw!" said Hans, laughing; "they are as well unspoken. He's always hanging about Lisa, and she don't like him."

"Not I," said Lisa. "So now I'll bar the

door, father, and we'll sing Ave Maria and be off."

And she put the violin into his hand.

"Lisa," said her father, gently taking the instrument from her and then laying it on the table, "I am going to play that hymn no more."

"No more, father?"

"No more, my dear daughter. Henceforth I shall only offer prayer and praise to the one true God."

"Father! What do you mean?"

"I mean what I say, Lisa. This morning, I could hardly be said to believe in God or man. To-night I am a firm believer in God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. But in no saint, no created being, as an object of worship."

Lisa clasped her hands in desperation. "This is your doing!" cried she, darting a reproachful look at Claude.

"Say rather," interposed her father, "'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.' God sent this man to our door to save me."

"To destroy the peace of the family, I think," exclaimed Lisa. "To break down the walls of

our faith! Oh! this is the first night we have ever gone to bed without joining in the Ave Maria! How *can* we expect a blessing to rest on the house?"

And wringing her hands together, she hurried into her own little chamber, and impetuously shut herself in.

"Never mind, never mind, my friend," said Hans to Claude, who looked full of trouble. "She'll come right soon or late. I know that girl's heart as well as I know my own."

"Our Lord himself warned us," said Claude, "that the gospel of peace should sow dissension in families; should set the father against the son, the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, the daughter against the mother." . . .

"Yes, it is the little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump," said Hans, "and, while the fermentation is going on, how should it be otherwise? Trust me, friend, though I am a new convert, I can see my way a little in this matter, and am prepared to take up this cross. And now, let us pray. Pray with us and for us, as you did last night, and then we will turn in."

The little boys wonderingly knelt beside their

father; then, when the short, fervent service was over, slipped off to bed.

"You are not going to-morrow?" said Max coaxingly to Claude as he wished him good night.

"Oh yes, I am."

"Oh no, you must not! You cannot!"

"Yes, I can, and I must. I have work to do."

"Do it here!"

"Good advice, Claude!" said Hans smiling.

"No," replied Claude, smiling in return, "my work here is done."

"Not while Lisa remains as she is," said Hans.

"I can safely trust her to you," said Claude.

"Trust her to her own father, indeed?" cried Mother Agnes,—“You, the acquaintance of yesterday!"

"And the friend of all future life, I hope," said Hans. "Well!—I dare not hinder your mission, and yet you might perhaps be more usefully employed in watering the seed you have sown in a grateful soil than in scattering it in dry places."

"The soil is so good, it is sure to take root,"

said Claude. "I may come back some day and put in my sickle."

"God grant it!" said Hans fervently. "And yet, I think you might give us one more day. "Don't you think so, mother?"

"Doubtless he knows his own concerns best," said Mother Agnes; "if you ask me, I must say I think he has been here long enough."

"I can't expect you to stay, after such a speech as that," said Hans to Claude, smiling. "Tarry a few minutes, however; you see my mother is just going off to bed, and I want to say a few words to you of my future plans and prospects. This doll-making is laid on the shelf for ever; I must consider what other things I can turn my hand to."

The two men sat up, in close and earnest communion, far into the night. It was not improbable that Hans, if he acted in consistence with his new views, would have to lay down all in order to follow the truth. The open Bible before them was frequently consulted. At length they went to rest.

At day dawn Lisa was feeding her pigeons, and the little boys were driving their reluctant

geese towards the goose-captain of the neighbourhood. Mother Agnes, sickle in hand, had already started to reap fodder for her cow; and Claude, who had had a draught of milk and had taken leave of Hans within doors, came forth, ready to start on his journey. His rude expulsion from the town overnight had, for the time, driven the girl Jaqueline from his thoughts, and, whether he would or no, he had been compelled to take flight in an opposite direction from that in which he had promised to overtake her; but he now purposed to follow her, though with little expectation of reaching her home in time to be of any service.

“Farewell, Lisa,” said he.

“Farewell,” returned Lisa carelessly.

“You will wish me good speed on my journey, I hope?”

“Oh, yes, as long as your road leads away from here, and your bag is empty.”

“My bag has a book in it still,” said Claude, “and I will give it you if you will accept it.”

“Thank you, I don’t want such a present. I should have to mention it the next time I confessed, and it would soon be taken away from me.

Your books have done harm enough among us already. Oh! why did you ever come here? You have sown dissension between me and my dear father!"

"He is longing to be at one with you again.—Go, seek him, and make it up with a single word."

"A single word! What is that word to be? Why, you have opened a great gulf between us! My heaven is no longer his heaven—"

"Then let his heaven become your heaven. Oh, Lisa! let my simple persuasions find their way to your heart. What motive can I have for trying to lead people astray? I seek to lead them from darkness to light! from the power of Satan unto God!"

"Thank you, we want none of your leading, we have very good leaders of our own already—authorized leaders."

"Ah, Lisa, if the blind lead the blind, shall not both fall into the ditch?"

"Really, we are very much obliged to you for the supposition. I hope our way is as likely to be right as yours. I believe, nay, I am sure it is!"

“ Well, since you will not accept my book, accept, at least, my fervent good wishes. And those wishes are, for your entire union of purpose and feeling with your father. However wrong you may think him, remember he *is* your father.”

“ I have not to learn that now. Farewell, Claude ; a pleasant journey to you, and a better mission to you !”

“ Farewell, Lisa. The Lord watch between thee and me when we are absent the one from the other.”

When he had walked a considerable distance from the house, he turned to take a last look, and saw Lisa still at the door, looking after him. He waved his hand to her, and she immediately went in.



CHAPTER IX.

BEWARE OF THE DOG.

IT is four o'clock in the afternoon of a mellow autumnal day. The sun's slanting rays light up storied height and dimpling valley, rippling stream and broad blue river, purple mountains in the distance, and rainbow-stained crags nearer at hand, grey, green, amber, coffee-colour, red, orange and tawny. Steam-boats rush along that broad blue river, but, as yet, no railroads intersect the land ; an English travelling-carriage is bowling along a high-road, planted with plum-trees and apple-trees loaded with purple and rosy fruit, which the peasants are busily gathering. Within the carriage, which is open, are Lord Coldingham and his daughters, the eldest of whom is reading, or seeming to read, while the youngest pursues

her quiet cogitations. Isabel Eyre, who is scarcely eighteen, is to be married at the end of the autumn, when her lover will return from a foreign court; this German tour, therefore, though it helps to pass the time, diverts without engrossing her thoughts. Between her and her younger sister there is all the difference between "out" and "not out;" to Ellen, scarcely seventeen, everything is new, everything is delightful; she wonders how her father and sister can read when there is so much to see; but discouraged by their pre-occupied attention to her frequent exclamations, she is trying to shut up her new and exciting impressions within her own heart and mind. Therefore she leans back in her softly-cushioned corner, notes all, and says nothing; but a continual smile plays about her sweet mouth, and lights up the dark depths of her large, stag-like eyes.

In the rumble sits John Perry. At the outset, he had a companion, Mrs. Evans, or, as she always pronounced her own name, Mrs. Heavens, the young ladies' maid; but she became indisposed at Cologne, and is to rejoin them at Bonn. Though she and John Perry are on the best of

terms, he is on the whole rather pleased to have the rumble to himself, without having his miscellaneous observations and reflections interrupted by her continual endeavours to learn of him, (which she never can,) the precise corresponding values of German and English money.

“To tell her once or twice and have done with it,” thinks he, “is all very well; but to have to tell her a dozen times in a day, ‘one groschen, a penny farthing, (for it’s no good being more fractional with her,) thirty groschen, one thaler,’ and then to hear her confusing a groschen with a thaler after all, is unwholesome for one’s temper.”

John Perry was a favourable specimen of the alert, intelligent young English footman; a sterling, shrewd, good-humoured, well-principled, faithful man-servant. He was a man of Kent; first-rate at cricket, quoits, swimming, rowing, fishing; good at accounts, fond of reading, famous at psalm-singing, and a player on the flute. Games of chance he eschewed with sovereign contempt; he had a pretty taste for mechanics, was a tolerable boxer and wrestler, a good son and brother, a good Christian, and, to conclude

the list, knew his own work and did it ; knew his own place and kept it. John had been brought up in Lord Coldingham's family, and would have gone through fire or water, had need been, for him or any of his house ; as for ' our young ladies,' whom he considered rather more than possible or probable angels—namely, angels certain if not yet absolute,—he would have held it a pleasure and privilege to bestow a black eye on any man, foreigner or otherwise, who should offer them the smallest indignity.

Full of his own cheerful thoughts, which he was mentally arranging in the form of a letter to his mother, to be written on thin, silvery, foreign paper at the next halt, John Perry sat on high, with his arms crossed on his chest as if he were on his way to Ascot races. The road, which began to ascend, was not steep enough to make it worth while for him to walk, so he did not offer to save the horses. The open country that stretched far and wide on either side, was studded with villages, farms, rows of fruit-trees, and corn-fields, but unbroken by a single hedge. This peculiarity offended the taste of John Perry, who loved the green hedge-rows of Kent, and had

already instituted many comparisons between hop-grounds and vineyards, to the disparagement of the latter.

As his eye somewhat contemptuously skimmed the surface of the wide champaign before him, John noted an ancient Bauer-hof, or farm-house, at the extremity of a field they were passing. At the door of this solitary dwelling stood a group which immediately fixed John's attention; in another minute or so, savage growls and yells, and wild, unearthly cries made Lord Coldingham and Miss Eyre look up from their books. A man was seen swiftly dashing across the field towards the road, pursued by a brace of savage mastiffs, who were likely to pull him down the next moment.

Ellen, catching the alarm from John Perry, as he stood up in the rumble eagerly gazing at the race, cried, "Papa! papa! something is the matter! let us stop!"

At the same instant, John, losing all memory of etiquette and of pure French pronunciation, leaned over the back of the carriage, eagerly exclaiming,

“My Lord! my Lord! the *coal-porter*! They have set their dogs at him.”

“Have him up in the rumble in a moment,” said Lord Coldingham.

No sooner said than done. The carriage immediately stopped; and Claude, the next minute, with the mastiffs at his heels, bounded into the road, caught John’s outstretched hand, and sprang into the seat beside him. John, with the handle of an umbrella, bestowed a well-directed blow on the foremost of the dogs, which sent him howling back to his companion, and the carriage drove on.

“You’re the light-footedest chap ever I saw!” cried John Perry, with admiration.

“How came this about? Was it for selling Bibles?” said Lord Coldingham, standing up and leaning over the back of the carriage, addressing himself to the colporteur with a look of much interest.

The accelerated action of Claude’s heart prevented him for a few moments from answering. He smiled, but could not turn his breath, and Lord Coldingham humanely awaited his recovery. When, at length, he could speak, he began

instinctively in his native language, but remembering himself, immediately changed it for English, which he spoke less rapidly, but without any hesitation.

“You honoured me, my Lord, by speaking to me, yesterday, in the town,” said Claude, “where I was offering Bibles for sale. In the evening, when I had parted with nearly all my stock, a tumult arose, and I was assailed with missiles and driven from the town. Chance led me back to a house where I had passed the previous night. The owner, who had purchased a Bible, had employed the entire day in its earnest perusal, not without prayer; and the result was a conversion as sudden, and, I believe, as effectual as that of Saul. Such cases are rare; some disbelieve in them altogether; I *know* that they occasionally occur. I seldom look for an immediate reward of my labours, but in this instance I had it. The man had great force of mind and simplicity of purpose. He was desirous I should continue under his roof, but I had a call to a certain village, not far from hence. On my way to it, after some hours’ journeying, I approached yonder farm-house. Having yet a Bible in store,

I resolved to offer it for sale, and approached the door. A man was crushing apples in a cider-mill; at first, he did not distinctly comprehend my business; but a clownish young man, probably his son, who had alighted from a heavy cart-horse just before I came up, and whose face I remembered to have seen overnight, spoke to him aside for a few moments with much eagerness, on which his face became inflamed with rage. 'You are the rascal,' said he to me, 'who caused such a tumult in the town last night. I dare say you thought the report of it would not reach this secluded place, but ill-news flies apace. If you do not instantly depart, I will set my dogs at you.' I was beginning to remonstrate; but, without another word, he put his threat into execution; and though I am no bad runner, yet, having a tender foot, it would have fared ill with me but for your Lordship's rescue."

"I rejoice that we came up at the time," said Lord Coldingham, "where are you going?"

"Towards Transdorf, my Lord."

"We shall pass through Transdorf. You may continue where you are till we get there. Do you often meet with such misadventures as these?"

"Continually, my Lord."

"You see, you are fighting against the stream."

"Constantly, my Lord. It must needs be so. A dead dog floats with the stream; a live dog can swim against it."

"Hum! Are there many of you?"

"I am the only one, my Lord, as yet."

"As yet! Then you expect co-labourers."

"Wherever there is a demand, there will eventually be a supply."

"But do you attempt to expound as well as distribute the Scriptures?"

"Where people will let me, my Lord."

"But that is infringing on the province of regularly trained and ordained teachers."

"Alas, my Lord! can people read the Bible *in the dark*? I shall be happy enough to yield my post to regularly ordained teachers when they volunteer to occupy it; meantime, I hold my little candle to those who cannot read without it."

"You had some sort of training, I think you told me yesterday, from Mr. Herbert."

"Yes, my Lord, he taught me as much as he

had strength to teach and I had capacity to receive during so short a time."

"You could not have had a better instructor: I knew him well; he was worthy of his name. He had some crotchets, though. So he favoured your teaching and preaching, did he?"

"He said, my Lord, he believed I had graduated in the school of Christ."

"Ha! That has a smack of George Herbert in it, certainly."

"He also said, my Lord, that Christianity is indeed conserved by church order, but does not exist for the mere sake of it. He thought if Christianity led the way, order would be sure to follow."

"Aye? That was a good deal like him too." And Lord Coldingham sat down and resumed his book; but did not turn the leaf for some minutes.

John Perry now took up the word.

"There's politeness for you!" said he, in an under-tone. "A ploughman two fields off pulling off his hat to us, though he never saw us before, nor ever will again."

"Why, English peasants *touch* their hats to strangers, don't they?" said Claude.

"Not two fields off," said John. "No, it's mere foreign varnish—French polish. Look at that old chap, a hammering out the edge of his scythe on a little anvil, instead of sharpening it on a whetstone. There's civilization for you! What are those people doing in the corner of that field?"

"Threshing their corn on a piece of ground they have trodden hard," said Claude.

"*We* thresh in barns," said John. "They've such a lot of queer customs, it almost provokes one to keep a journal. I think I shall, if I ever come abroad again; but it's too late to begin now. Look at those youngsters with great bundles on their heads, knitting as they go. There's industry for you?"

"They are carrying home fodder for their cows," said Claude. "Nothing comes amiss to them, for one use or another. Some of the children are washing the weeds they have collected in the stream."

"There's economy for you!" said John. "Our English cows would turn up their noses at such rubbish."

"German cows are not so particular," said

Claude. "Many a poor family that cannot afford to turn out a cow to grass, can spare the labour of a child or old woman to reap the weeds and coarse grass on waste places enough for a cow's keep. We who journey from place to place should not be too bigoted to the customs of our own countries to take a hint from others when we find it."

"All very well as far as it goes," said John. "Some nations and some people are thrifty in one thing, some in another. As long as I drink plain water, my lord allows me my beer-money. I shall have enough, soon, to buy a French horn. What a lot of beer-money the Germans might save!"

"They might, indeed," said Claude, smiling.

"It was unlucky too, in some respects," said John, "that I gave up beer when I did; for I find, upon trial, that the German water does not agree with me. Consequence is, I am only able to take coffee or Seltzer water, and am thirsty all day. I didn't take a pledge, mind ye! but I persevere for the sake of consistency."


"And in that you have your reward," said Claude.

"'Tisn't only in their beer," continued John. "There's a lot of other things they don't come up to the mark in, in these Catholic countries. Why, now, I heard my lord reckoning, that the working days in a Protestant year are three hundred and ten, because we only rest on the Sabbath day, Christmas day, and Good Friday, Easter Monday and Tuesday, and Whit Monday, whereas these foreigners, who don't keep Sunday like Sunday at all, but have their shops and theayters open, and their reviews and so forth, their working year has only two hundred and sixty days, because they keep such a lot of saints' days. Whereby we've a clear advantage over them of one-sixth of our time, in the way of industry."

"Ah," said Claude, "we have a clear advantage over them in many an instance besides that. Did you ever hear of the Edict of Nantes?"

"Not I," said John.

"Well, a good many years ago, when the Protestants, or Huguenots, were pretty strong in France, and much blood had been shed between them and the Catholics, a law was passed for their protection, called the Edict of Nantes. From that time they flourished to an extraordinary



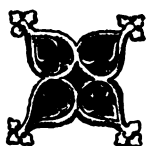
degree, and the district in which they were settled became so fertile under their cultivation, that men called it 'the Garden of the Lord.' Besides his field-labour, every peasant had his loom; while those who lived in towns became such thriving manufacturers as to monopolize almost all the commerce of the South of France. In an evil hour, Louis the Fourteenth resolved to put a stop to all this. So, by way of feeler, he first destroyed twenty-two of their churches. Then he released the Catholics from paying their debts to Protestants for three years; then the dead bodies of persons who had refused the Romish communion were dug up and dragged about the streets; then dying Protestants were obliged to submit to the presence of Romish priests and magistrates, who endeavoured to make them recant; finally, dragoons were quartered on the peaceable Protestants, with liberty to execute incredible cruelties on them;—they roasted them before slow fires, thrust their heads into hot ovens, till the Huguenots, persecuted beyond endurance, emigrated in vast numbers to England and Holland, carrying their skill in manufactures with them, and thereby nobly repaying the hospitality

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of the countries that sheltered them, while the commerce of their own land received an irreparable blow. . . . But, stop!" cried Claude, interrupting himself, as they reached a broken cross by the wayside,—“here our roads divide; God's blessing be with you!”

“Must you go?” said John.

“I must, indeed.” And having uttered a few words of grateful farewell to Lord Coldingham, the colporteur proceeded briskly on his way.





CHAPTER X.

JAQUELINE.

WHEN Claude approached the white cottage with the three linden-trees, he slackened his pace. Not a soul was in sight; the door and windows were shut, and the red sunbeams glittered on the small, diamond-shaped panes that peered through their clustering mantle of ivy. Had Jaqueline returned? had she been forgiven? had she been repulsed? were questions that occasioned some anxiety.

The moment he tapped at the door, it was hastily opened, and a couple of eager faces were thrust out: they belonged to a grey-haired but vigorous old peasant, and a woman not much younger than himself.

"It is not she!" said the old man, with a gesture of impatience.

"But he may know something of her, nevertheless," said the old woman. "What do you want, good man?"

"Is your name Schiller?" said Claude.

"Aye, aye, I'm Diedrich Schiller," said the peasant, "and this is Johanna my wife. Have you seen our Jaqueline?"

"Has she not, then, returned?"

"Alas, no," said Johanna, clasping her hands in anguish; "three days ago she left us, we know not why nor with whom, and we have neither seen nor heard anything of her since. Oh, my heart!"—and sitting down on a bench, the poor mother sank into tears.

"You see! you see!" said old Schiller to Claude, pointing towards his wife; "you see how it is with her, master: she naturally fears the worst. And though I'm of a firmer sort, I know not what to think. I don't know who you are, nor why you come; but we naturally thought you might have seen our daughter—"

"I have," said Claude.

"Hear that!" cried Schiller, looking encou-

ragingly at his wife, who immediately rose, wiping her eyes, and came towards him. "Well, master?"

"I saw her yesterday," said Claude. "There was a festival, you know, going on, which had drawn many people together—your daughter among the rest."

"We forbade her to go," said Schiller; "the distance was too great for either of us, and we had no one we liked to trust her with."

"I was taking some refreshment at a coffee-house," said Claude, "and at a table near me sat a young man and a girl. That girl was your daughter."

"The young man was Leopold Hemling, no doubt," said Schiller, furrowing his brow and setting his teeth close.

"He was about my height, but more strongly built, with yellow hair, grey eyes, and a scar on his left cheek."

"'Twas he, the rascal!" cried Schiller, clenching his hands; "We had forbidden him the house, and I fear that *he*, rather than the festival, tempted Jaqueline from home. Go on."

"He was talking to her earnestly and pas-

sionately, not in such guarded tones but that I could gather the substance of what he said. The girl was choking in tears, and I could make out that he was tempting her to a course of sin."

"I knew it, I was sure of it!" cried old Schiller, covering his eyes, "I knew he never meant her any good. And she, so mistaken! so obstinate!—" Tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks; his wife wiped them away.


"But hear what ensued, my good friend," said Claude, taking his hand. "She would not be guided by him. In terrible anger he rose and left her."

"Then, where is she?" cried Johanna.

—"I thought," said Claude, faltering, "I should find her here."

"Oh no! oh no! You only come to confirm our worst fears. You tell us who was with her, and you have not brought her home!—"

"But hear me," said Claude. "When the young man left her, she continued weeping. In a low voice I addressed to her the words of Scripture, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?"

"And she!—" 

"She started,—looked round,—appeared surprised at my addressing her. In the same tone I continued, There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Arise and go to thy father!"

"Oh, true friend!" cried Schiller, grasping him by the hand.

"Much more passed.—She confessed that she had left home without your knowledge and in defiance of your known wishes; but was sorry for it. I applauded her for having so firmly resisted her wicked counsellor, and advised her instantly to return home. She said she dared not! She dreaded the anger of her father, but more especially of her mother."

"No wonder, no wonder," said Johanna hastily.

"I expostulated with her in your names and for your sakes. I felt assured you would welcome the returning penitent. I knew you would remember that we are all sinners, and that Christ died for us, and that we must forgive one another. She wavered, trembled; at last consented."

"God be praised!" cried Schiller. "But this was twenty-four hours ago; she might have been home last night!"

“ Well—the day was far spent when I parted from her ; it has now taken me some hours to come over the same ground—Still, I thought she might, she would—she may have tarried by the way, at the house of some friend—”

“ We have no friend on the road,” said Schiller, disconsolately.

“ More likely some harm has befallen the child by the way,” cried Johanna. “ Or she may have returned, after all, to that villain, Hemling !”

“ To encourage her,” said Claude, “ I told her that I would follow her and endeavour to make her peace with you, but I was prevented from keeping my promise by circumstances I could not foresee. When I last saw her, her face was set towards home.”

“ Let us go !” cried Schiller, taking up his hat and staff, “ she may have fainted by the way—”

At this moment, a slender shadow darkened the threshold, and a drooping, downcast figure leant against the door-post.

“ Father, I am here ! forgive—” said Jaqueline, sinking on her knees.

Schiller sprang towards her, with joy and

affection on his face. Her mother, on the contrary, directly she saw she was safe, hardened herself against her. Claude marked and understood the revulsion of feeling.

“Go to her,” he whispered softly, “she is all in tears, and too ashamed to look up—go to her.”

“It is not my place to go to her, but hers to come to me,” replied Johanna, doggedly; “am I to make much of a good-for-nothing, disobedient girl, that has been three days out of sight of her friends, in bad company, just because she comes back to the only people that care for her, when nobody else will have her?”

“Don’t say that,” whispered Claude, still more strenuously, “because you know it is not true;—Leopold Hemling would have had her, and tried so hard to have her that none but a very good girl could have stood out against his beguiling tongue.”

“Do you call a girl a good girl who puts herself in the way of such beguiling?”

“There is none good, no, not one! Jesus Christ himself said so. We are none of us good but by comparison; and I called her good, not because

I thought her absolutely good, for she has committed a great fault, but because only the good daughter of a good mother could have acted as she did at the time I first saw her." He gently laid his hand on Johanna's arm ; but the arm was twitched away.

" Good daughter, forsooth ! " cried she ; " how shall I ever have the least trust in her again ? "

" One woman should have pity on another , " pursued Claude. " A mother should have pity on her child. The Lord has pity on us all. "

She was going to reply in the same harsh, cutting manner as before, when some softer influence suddenly came over her. With tears in her eyes, she went up to her daughter and put her arm round her neck.

" Oh, mother, I can't bear this ! " cried Jacqueline. " I thought you would never— " and she clung to her in tears.

When the first gush of emotion was over, Claude gently said, " Let us pray. " They all knelt down.

" And now, farewell, " said he, when his prayer was over.

“Going?” cried Schiller, “just as we find time to think of you as well as of ourselves?”

“Yes, my good friend, I have nothing more to do here. My work calls me hence.”

“How can we shew our sense of your kindness?”

“Very simply. Your daughter has a book I have given her; let her read in it to you frequently, till I come again. For I may come again some day.”

“Won’t you even break bread with us before you depart?”

“To tell you the truth, I could not swallow just now. No, I am not hungry—I feel something of what our Lord felt when He said, ‘I have meat to eat that ye know not of; my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.’ Old man!”—and he laid his hand on Schiller’s shoulder with extreme solemnity and gentleness, “your daughter has committed a great fault; has shunned a greater. And if,” turning to Jaqueline, who listened to him with suspended breath, “if you now apply with a true, penitent heart, to the cleansing blood of Christ, instead of to any delusive acts of superstition, God will blot out your transgressions, and

your sins will he remember no more. You will find all about it in that book ; read it day and night ! read and pray ! ”

In another minute he was gone.

Was Claude prudent in thus proclaiming to one who had so lately transgressed, the full, free promises of the Gospel ? Let us answer this question by asking others :—*Is* justification by faith promised, or is it not ? Did Jesus Christ preach it with reserve to publicans and sinners ? Does it not, whatever man’s theories about it may be,—does it not practically bring forth the fruits of good and holy living ? Is faith the root or the branch ? Is morality the fruit or the root ? Can anything so break the stubborn heart as the discovery that God is love ? That he loves us sinners while he hates our sins, and that his most earnest desire is to free us from their power and their penalty ? Let us once *feel* his love to be ours, and a life of holy obedience is sure to follow ! All experience is for it, even though all argument should be against it.

However, all we have to do is to relate the story of a man who firmly believed the doctrine of justification by faith, and who acted upon it,

Claude was now taking the road to Bonn as if treading upon air. His heart was light, and overflowing with cheerfulness; all nature seemed to sympathize with him, the very hills to clap their hands, and the valleys to laugh and sing. No hyperboles were too strong; no metaphors too bold to express the gladness which universal nature displayed around him. As he passed under the trees laden with ripe plums and apples along the way-side, the peasants who were gathering them threw him handfuls of ripe fruit, with a cheerful greeting; and never did ripe plum or apple taste more delicious. In front of cottage doors, busy housewives were setting trays of plums and cherries to dry in the sun, or hanging strings of sliced apples from the window-sills. "In how many ways," thought he, "is our good God generous to us! In the spring he brings forth the tender blades and young blossoms, in the autumn he pours the abundant fruits of the earth into our bosoms, good measure, pressed down and running over. O Lord our Governor! how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"

His mind was so buoyant, so full of pleasant thoughts, as to give him sources of enjoyment

independent of outward circumstances. He thought of the Schillers with complacency, and made out for himself, in imagination, some outline, which was in fact, not far from the reality, of poor Jaqueline's homeward journey, her disappointment at his not rejoining her, her fears of meeting her parents alone, and her hanging about the cottage after nightfall, and sleeping in some barn or outhouse, with a feeling of their protection about her though they knew not she was at hand. He thought of her probable future; and prayer for her formed itself in his heart.

Then he thought of the town, the festival, the preaching friar, the pickpocket, and the pigs,—of Mrs. Amelia, of Barbara, of Dr. Bauer, of Margaret Müller, of the poor artist:—they seemed like figures in a dream, or shades in a magic lantern, so quickly had they vanished, one after another.

Then he lingered with sedate sweetness on the thought of Hans. He felt that, short as their intercourse had been, he could esteem that man as his brother. He thought of Lisa with an interest and tenderness he had never felt for a woman before. There was nothing to draw him

back to her, their paths did not run parallel, it was not likely he would ever see her again, he had no desire but to go right on ; and yet he was conscious of a delicious feeling towards her, passing the love of a brother. Again his heart formed a prayer ; it was for her conversion.

Then he thought of that benevolent old woman, Mother Agnes. Those deep violet-blue eyes, that expressive smile, so lovely even in age,—what must they have been at the age of Lisa ? That spontaneous kindness, that cheerfulness and activity, which made her a match for any one in the family ; how richly Heaven had endowed her with gifts that no money could purchase ! Insensible and unimpressionable, nevertheless, to everything relating to spiritual life ! Could such an one go on to the end, along the broad path leading to destruction, chatting and smiling as she went ? No. He had faith that God must have marked her for his own.

Then, those two pretty boys, with voices like larks, and faces like cherubs—if he were a father, he should like two just such curly, chubby, funny, loving little rogues to be his own.

Lord Coldingham again ; with so much to be

proud of, and no pride—those two high-born, high-minded girls, with intellect and purity stamped on their open brows—and that jocund, light-hearted young fellow in the rumble, up to anything, equal to anything!—Claude's thoughts were presently off to merry England.

And now, just as night is falling, he enters Bonn. Lord Coldingham is there also, but they put up in very different quarters.





CHAPTER XI.

THE STEAM-BOAT.

THOUGH daylight had scarcely faded, the enormous saloon of the Hotel de l'Etoile, in which a hundred and fifty persons were seated at the *table d'hôte*, was in a blaze of illumination: scores of waiters were hurrying hither and thither, presenting dishes to each guest in succession, or bearing immense piles of plates; a noisy band performing opera airs was nearly drowned in the clatter of knives and forks and the hum of many voices; and it occurred to John Perry that there could hardly have been more hubbub at Belshazzar's Feast.

At the more plebeian table of the Boule d'Or, in the bourgeois quarter of the city, Claude found a number of shaggy, heavy-headed tradesmen, supping together instead of in the bosom of their

own families ; each with a long pipe that nearly reached from his mouth to the floor, and with a pint of wine before him. They were so obscured in a cloud of smoke of their own raising, that Claude, whom the smell of tobacco always affected with nausea, felt his best refuge would be in bed. As soon, therefore, as he had discussed his frugal meal, he retired to his chamber, and slept profoundly till daybreak.

When he awoke, the blue Rhine was trembling and sparkling in the rising sun. He sprang up, dressed, prayed, partook his early breakfast, and hastened to the river-side. In passing a cross street, he saw a man just turning out of sight in advance of him, whom he knew in a moment to be his old persecutor : and could hardly help smiling to think that, this time, he saw him, himself unseen. But what if his old foe, unseen, had seen him already ? overnight ? He *had*.

Claude found his way to the steam-boat, which was moored close alongside the quay, apart from it only the length of a plank. He entered it at once ; the men were at their breakfasts, sitting about the deck, and exchanging a few words, now and then, with a few companions sitting on the

quay. Claude took out his little Bible and began to read to himself. Presently a lull in the conversation ensued : shortly afterwards, a man with his mouth full observed, " Come, master, as you are amusing yourself, you may as well amuse us. Read us a spell."


Claude, looking up at him, and then all around on his audience, whom he took in at a glance, immediately raised his right arm and hand before him, with a gesture that, had it not been so perfectly natural to him, might have been called theatrical, but, as it was, had something in it singularly impressive; and after a single moment's pause, that was just sufficient to fasten every eye upon him, he burst forth in his soul-stirring manner, with—

" ' Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ! buy, and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ' "

—And so on to the end of the chapter. The effect was electrical. The men drew about him, rapt, absorbed ; just as we see them portrayed in one of Pinelli's etchings, grouped on the quay of Naples, listening to an improvisatore who sings

the adventures of Rinaldo—one with his hands clasped round his knee, another with his arm resting on his companion's shoulder, another with his arms folded on his chest, his teeth set, his eye fixed, his soul in the world of dreams. As for Claude, like his Divine Master, he taught from the ship, while a cluster of his hearers stood on the shore. Having read the chapter straight through, with amazing power and fire for an unlearned man who had only zeal and a good natural taste to guide him, he closed the book, though one or two bade him "go on;" for he saw steam-boat passengers trooping down to the quay with porters and luggage, and the next moment the noisy bell rang, and the deck was covered with people. Volumes of black smoke were now issuing from the chimney, men were bustling about, talking, leave-taking, and pulling off their hats. Claude continued at the side of the vessel, which was just on the point of starting, when a crowd of excited-looking people rushed down towards it, crying, "A Jonah on board! A Bible-Mame-luke! Over with him! Into the water with him! Trundle him over to us, and we'll make short work with him!"

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—"Aha, my boys, don't you wish you may get him!" cried John Perry in English, as the boat moved off. "*Was will er?*" shouted he derisively, and shaking his clenched hand at them as the distance between them increased. The men made violent gestures at him and at Claude in return, while all the others along the water-side, with national politeness, were pulling off their hats.

"What jolly fun;" said John Perry, addressing himself to Claude, and raising his hand on high to clap it into the open palm of the other with more cordiality, "what did they want of you? why should they throw you into the river? Just for reading a chapter in the Bible? My senses!"—

"You didn't know I was here," continued he, setting in for a regular gossip, "I'm running down to Cologne, to fetch up Mrs. Evans, who has run aground for want of knowing foreign languages. Are you going as far?"

"I am going on to Rotterdam."

"Oh!—our course lies quite the other way—I think we shall push on to Bohemia.—By that time Sir Charles will have returned, and we shall get back for Miss Eyre to be married. Look

here ! I've bought a horn. Second-hand, for ten florins. I don't know if its a very good one, because I've been afraid of blowing it very loud, lest I might annoy Lord Coldingham ; though there was such a row at the *table d'hôte* last night, that I did not think one noise more would have made much difference. Just between courses, I did step out and give one little blow. Unfortunately, the note that came out wasn't in the key the band were playing in, and I was obliged to hush it up directly—like what Miss Ellen calls making *sons étouffés* on her harp. One of the waiters, running by, gave me such a look ! I pretended I was only blowing my nose, and smuggled it away in my handkerchief. To repay myself, I shall get up on the top of one of these hills, and blow like . . . like to blow your head off."

"What a beautiful river this is !" said Claude.

"You may say so," returned John, "and yet it's not so much the river as the banks. Hills and plains, and wide champaigns. Mountains, rocks, and snow-white flocks. Castles high, that touch the sky. Oh my, oh my ! it's all my eye."

"If you *had* an eye, you would not say so," observed Claude.

"Yes, I should, because I only said so for fun. Taken as a whole, Germany's nothing to England; but with regard to rocks and castles on them, it flogs Kent!"

"To me, now, the rocks and mountains appear like toys," said Claude.

"You must have been in Switzerland, then, I'm thinking," said John. "Ah, by the by, you *are* Swiss, I remember. You come from where they sing,—

"Venite tutti, bianchi e rossi,
Neri e—."

"Do you know now," interrupted Claude with a forced smile that went off into something very like a sob, "that's just what I can't stand!"

"Can't you?" said John with surprise; and at the same time a passenger at the other end of the deck who had caught the fragment of the air John was humming, took it up on a flageolet.

"Strange, is not it?" said Claude, his eyes filling so fast that he was quite ashamed of himself, "strange, that a bit of a tune like that should make me see my mother at her cottage door

looking towards the cow-pastures, and my sister Françoise, who has long been dead, coming across the meadow in the evening sun—”

—He could “daub it no longer,” as Edgar says in *King Lear*, but fairly laid his head down on his arms, and wept as if his heart would break.

“Poor fellow, poor fellow,” said John compassionately, “I’ve heard something before of this strange disease you Swiss are subject to—*mal de pay*.”

“Not quite so bad as that,” said Claude, wiping his eyes, and then gushing out again.

“’Tis that, I say, and nothing short of it,” said John positively. “*Malady de pay*—*mal*’s short for *malady*. I’ve heard my lord speak of it. You’ll have to go back to your own country, my poor fellow ; nothing else will cure you.”

“Oh, yes, it’s passing off,” said Claude, drying his eyes.

“Do you know,” said John, “I was about to ask you some questions about that country of yours, because it’s a land I much desire to see, and very likely *shall* see next summer ; but as you’re so tender upon it, I won’t allude to it any more,”

"Ask me what questions you will," replied Claude, "nothing will do me so much good as talking of it."

And for the next two hours the two men were in earnest and almost continuous conversation on Switzerland, only pausing now and then to bestow a passing and pre-occupied attention on the ever changing beauties of the river banks. John had so many questions to put, wholly disconnected, and some of them enough to puzzle Œdipus, that the dialogue for some time took the form of a catechism ; but at length it gave place to almost continuous narrative. Claude went over his own history, then went back to the early history and persecutions of the Vaudois, not omitting the "Glorious Return" of Henri Arnaud ; all which to hear did John Perry seriously incline. They sat a little way apart from every one but an unsociable, sick, or sleepy voyager, wrapped in his cloak, with his foraging cap pulled over his eyes, who lay on a bench a little way off ; and who, after a few muttered pishes and pshaws at having his own meditations or slumbers disturbed by so much talking, at length applied himself quietly to listen to every word that was said, and

found himself not paid amiss for his trouble. Once or twice an irrepressible smile at John's remarks only escaped observation under shelter of his cloak-collar ; once or twice, as Claude related the fortitude and long-suffering of his people, or spoke of the various exercises his own constancy had been exposed to, the eavesdropper became intently interested ; once or twice, even a tear, strange visitant ! found its way into his eye. At length, John, suddenly finding himself very hungry, and observing other people going to dinner, said he must go and make friends with some one going below, and bade Claude accompany him. Claude, with a smile, shook his head, and produced a roll.

"Ha !" cried John, "'tis that low diet that ruins your constitution, and makes the least thing upset you. Come along with me."

Claude declined, and, when John had left him, resumed his book. A bridal couple, rather tired of themselves and of each other, amused themselves at a distance from him by betting what his book was likely to be. At length, to settle the wager, they approached Claude.

"You seem interested in your reading, my

good fellow," said the gentleman very condescendingly ; " pray, what may your book be ? "

" The Bible, sir," said Claude. " Do you wish to buy it ? "

" No, thanke'e," said the other very hastily ; and retreating with his companion, he observed to her in English, " Sharp practice, that ! Never knew a cooler thing in my life ! "

The lady tittered. The gentleman was going to make some additional remark, when he was checked by Claude's stepping up to him.

" Why did you say ' Sharp practice,' sir ? " said he respectfully, in English. " You asked me, of your own accord, the name of my book ; it was the last I had on hand, of many that I have been selling about the country ; and as in many instances they have been purchased with avidity, as containing ' the pearl of great price,' I thought it possible you might desire to have one. That was all. "

And he withdrew to his old place, as gently as he came.

" Hang the fellow," said the gentleman, laughing rather foolishly, " who would have thought of his knowing English ? "

John Perry came up at this moment. "See what I've got for you here," said he, producing sundry apples and nuts. "These are the things you'll like, *I* know! You spare feeders with low spirits and weak stomachs are always fond of these indigestible commodities. And I like them too; they don't disagree with me; nothing does but the German water. So now we'll go shares; nature has given us good nut-crackers. . . I've been thinking of you while I was away, and the sum of my thoughts is, that if you would have plenty of boiled beef and carrot, roast beef and horse-radish, boiled mutton and turnips, three times a-day, you'd have no more of this *mal de pay*."

By the time they approached Cologne, these two men had made as much progress in each other's liking, as many would have taken a couple of months to accomplish.

"Now then, here we come," said John, "to where the people live in lots, all among the chimney-pots. . . . Eleven thousand virgins—I don't believe there were ever so many unmarried young women in one place at one time. Ah, there's Mother Evans on the look out for me—that neat old lady in the black silk gown."

"Old?" said Claude, "she does not look forty."

"Won't see thirty again, though," said John, "so she's no chicken. But as good a soul, when you come to know her!—why, she's been like a second mother to our young ladies! I fancy there's many a mother in high life has fretted less for a child, than Mrs. Hevans did for Miss Ellen, when she thought she would not get over the scarlet fever. Now, she sees me. Well, they must disembody me here, so God bless you, good bye! I like you, my boy, and I hope we shall meet again."

When Claude reached Rotterdam, he went to a small quiet-looking house, in a quiet street, at the end of which might be caught a glimpse of a barge-laden canal, glittering in the sun, and bordered with tall trees, under which men were busy among casks, trucks, and bales of goods. Claude, entering the quiet house by a passage, the cleanliness of which was in agreeable contrast to the dirty German entrances, tapped at a door on the ground-floor, and was bidden "come in." He entered a room furnished almost as plainly as a counting-house, the sole occupant of which was a pale,

reverend looking man, advanced in life, who might fitly have represented one of the early Huguenot ministers. He was intently engaged in writing; but when he looked up and saw Claude, he appeared pleased rather than surprised.

"Well," said he, "returned at last! You have been much in my mind and in my prayers. What success, this time?"

Claude sat down and gave a detailed account of his doings, which, as they dated from an earlier point than that at which we have taken up his history, occupied considerable time. He spoke of dangers, difficulties, obstacles, successes and encouragements: of new ground broken, and of old converts re-visited. His auditor listened with great interest, and asked many questions.

"So you have come back empty-handed," said he at length.

"No, I have one copy still left," said Claude, producing it. And he then drew from his bosom a leathern purse, and accurately reckoned and paid down the money the books had brought him.

"That for yourself," said his auditor, putting an inconsiderable sum into his hand, "but are you sure I give you enough?"

"Oh yes! I would rather not be burthened with more. It is enough and more than enough for my needs. You see, I so often get free quarters."

"The labourer is worthy of his hire, my dear friend. You accept a crust, and leave a blessing. Well, are you tired of your work yet?"

"Oh no! I love it more than ever."

"God be praised! On the whole, I think we are making a little way."

"Oh yes; but what is one among so many? There ought to be a hundred in the field—in this one field!"

His friend smiled and shook his head. "I shall not live to see that," said he.

"Nor I, I am afraid," said Claude. "However, what one man can do, I will do. When will my fresh supply of Bibles be ready?"

"When shall you be prepared to start?"

"To-morrow."

"To-morrow?"

"Not to-day, sir, because my shoes want mending; and my spare shirt and socks want washing."

"My good fellow, why start off again so soon as to-morrow? You want a little rest."

"Oh no, I am as fresh as a lark! You know I was on board the steamer all yesterday. That was entire rest."

"Well, the books shall be ready for you to-night—then, you can start when you will. Which course are you thinking of taking next?"

"Have you any wishes on the subject?"

"Oh no! I leave everything to you."

"I was thinking, then, sir, I should like to visit a few of the acquaintance I made on my first round, and see how they fare. After that, I might be guided by circumstances."

"Precisely so. I have long felt it best to trust all the details to yourself. Well, go and get your shoes mended or buy a new pair, and return to dine with Cathos and me at one o'clock. But fail not, in the interim, to look in on Mr. Vandervelt. I know he wants to see you."

"I will, sir. Then, farewell for the present—we shall have ample time for farther talk at dinner."

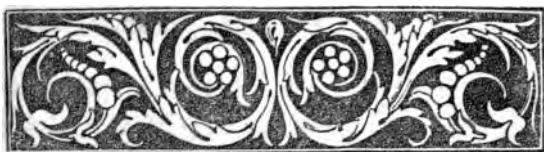
"God be with you."

And the old man calmly resumed his pen as Claude closed the door. Claude next proceeded to the residence of one of the merchant princes of

Rotterdam, overlooking the principal canal. It was a princely mansion. Noble stone-steps, heavily carved architraves, pannelled walls hung with Dutch paintings, and the ceiling of the principal saloon painted with the Four Seasons, betokened the abode of commercial opulence; yet the counting-house formed part of the dwelling, and the wealthy merchant always dined with his family at one o'clock, and returned immediately afterwards to business. He received Claude with cordiality, listened with interest to his narrative, which he told succinctly, put several pertinent questions, offered him a small sum of money, and, on its being declined, did not press it on him, but bade him remember he might have it whenever he wanted it. After this, a short conversation, strictly and personally religious, ensued; after which, the merchant shook hands with Claude and dismissed him. He went on his various errands about the town, then returned to dine with the venerable Mr. Boer and his pretty daughter, and spent an hour or two afterwards in conversation with them.

He slightly altered his plans, so as not to start on the following day, which was Saturday, but to

remain to spend a quiet Protestant Sabbath in Rotterdam, and gather new mental and spiritual, not to say bodily strength and refreshment, before he commenced a fresh progress. This gave him time for a little completer refitting than he had at first, in his ardour, deemed needful ; for Claude, in his few personal requirements, travelled as light of luggage, independent of his books, as an early apostle, providing neither two coats for his journey nor two pair of shoes, and very little gold, silver, or brass ; merely a change of linen which he could get washed in any village where he tarried for a day and a night. Thus, light of purse and baggage, light of foot, and light of heart, he quitted Rotterdam on Monday morning with a heavily-laden bag slung round his neck by a strap, which, to a less zealous traveller than himself, would have been no slight burthen.




CHAPTER XII.

CLAUDE SOWS BY THE WAYSIDE.

CLAUDE took advantage of a steam-boat for the first two or three hours of his progress: then he disembarked, or “disembogued” as John Perry called it, and proceeded briskly over ground well known to him. He encountered and passed several waggons laden with white deal tubs of various sizes, for the approaching vintage, and presently reached an open spot where scores of these waggons were drawn up in the shade and their contents spread about the ground in profusion, while a regular market or fair was going on among a considerable number of peasants. Here Claude paused to draw breath, and sat down to rest on a shaft of one of the empty waggons. A man, playing a wild kind of music on a rustic

pipe sat near, under the hedge, while one or two Dutch-built little urchins were uncouthly but merrily gambolling to his melody, and a few idlers hung about. When the man ceased playing, Claude dropped a few words which led to a desultory kind of conversation. By and by, his grand subject was quietly broached, his bag opened, and a few of his books disposed of. He continued talking to these poor people for some time, till they were drawn away from him by their needful affairs. After this, the business of the fair went on so briskly that he found no other opening; and, guessing from his foregone acquaintance with such scenes, that as the day waned chaffering would only be exchanged for waltzing and beer-drinking, he pursued his way.

Presently he came in sight of a village church, with steep tiled roof and strange-looking spire. The crosses over the graves in the little churchyard were hung with garlands, and with little cups of holy water. Across the opposite field was an old manorial residence, something in the style of Rubens' country-house; and along the road in front of it walked a stately, elderly couple, who



might have represented Teniers and his wife, with their footboy at their heels.

A little farther on, he came to the modest dwelling of the vicar of the little church, who was just stepping from his door, and seeing Claude approach with his burthen, paused for a moment to see if he had any business with him. Claude presented to him one of his books. The moment the vicar ascertained what it was, his face became inflamed, and he exclaimed, "You infamous monster! is this the way you dare to come and infest the village with your bad books, and poison the minds of my poor, simple people, with your impious doctrine?"

"Be calm, sir," interposed Claude, "and see if you are warranted in treating me so harshly."

"Are you not," continued the vicar, angrily, "the *garde champêtre* of Fluy?"

"No, I am not."

"At any rate, are you not a Protestant, a renegade, a heretic?"

"Ah, sir," said Claude, "your heat has taken away your memory, and you do not just now recollect the precept of the Apostle, to reply with mildness and charity to those who differ in senti-

ment from you, and by those means to avoid all irritating disputes. Moderate your displeasure, I beseech you, and see whether the copies of the Holy Scriptures which I offer you are not faithful translations from the Vulgate version sanctioned by your Church."

Instead of doing this, the vicar became more enraged. "Where is your hawker's licence?" said he; "I don't believe you have one."

Claude exhibited it.

"That's nothing, nothing at all," said he, scarcely glancing at it, "it merely authorizes you to sell books in general, not Bibles in particular, as I shall soon make you know, in the presence of a magistrate. What will you say then?"

"Time enough, sir, to think what I shall say when I am in his presence," replied Claude, calmly but firmly. "Our Lord himself has left me a plain direction what to do in that case. 'Settle it therefore in your heart, not to meditate beforehand what ye shall answer, for *I* will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist;' see, here is the passage,—Luke, twenty-one, fourteen."

"Have you the assurance to compare yourself to one of the holy apostles?" said the vicar.

"No, sir; these words were meant for the direction of all Christ's faithful people."

"A gloss, a mere gloss. All denominations would in that case avail themselves of it. You are a pestilent fellow, who not only hawk dangerous matter, but make it more dangerous still by your own misinterpretations. I have no patience with you!"

"Alas, sir, you should have nothing *but* patience with me!"

"Don't bandy words with me, man, or I'll hale you before the magistrate!" And he seized him violently by the arm.

"Well, sir, I am quite willing to be treated as the early Christians were."

He dropped the unresisting arm. "I have changed my mind," said he, "you are not worth the trouble it would cost me; besides, I remember our magistrate has just gone from home to the next town. I shall take some precautionary measures, however, against you."

And, darting an angry look at the passive col-

porteur, he brushed past him, and hastily walked forward towards the village.

Claude guessed that he should find every door closed against him, and he was right. People reviled him as he passed along without his speaking a word, and children threw mud and stones at him. He remembered Jesus and the Samaritans ; and passed on to another village.

Evening was now drawing on apace, and Claude began to feel the want of some refreshment. He saw at the entrance of the village he was approaching, in the midst of a pleasant orchard, a coffee-house, the white-washed walls of which were picked out with pea-green paint, and having a cool, shady veranda running round it, under which he thought he should gladly make his dinner and supper together. A woman stood at the door with a huge coffee-mill in her hands ; and on his making his wishes known to her, she cheerfully promised him some capital coffee ; but a peasant inside the house, who had entered just before him, after scowling at him for a moment, cried, " That's the knave that has just been chased from our village for vending pestilent books. Our good vicar came round to us and warned us

against him, just in time. Have nothing to do with him."

"Certainly I will not!" cried the woman, crossing herself; nor could Claude's mildest expostulations procure any remission of his sentence. Hungry, thirsty, and annoyed, he shouldered his bag and went on.

"Well," thought he, "it is not the first time—and it was our Lord's portion. Hungry, and weary, he had not where to lay his head."

At the end of the village, he saw a shop where he went in and bought bread, but he did not offer any of his merchandize for sale. He trudged on eating his roll as he went, hoping, before night fell, to reach another village. Presently, by the road-side, he saw a group of persons sitting, while a tilted cart was drawn up near them, and a small, lean horse, was eating some coarse grass a woman was cutting for it with a sickle from under the bank. Her companions consisted of a man and two small figures, apparently of children, huddled together under a coarse cloak, with whom he was sharing some bread and cheese.

"Good evening, friends," said Claude, approaching.

" Good evening, master," returned the man.

" How far is it to the next village ? "

" Have you never been this road before ? " said the man bluntly.

" I have, but it was some time ago, and I am not quite sure of my course. I want a night's lodging."

" Then you must push on, or you won't get one when you reach D——," said the man, " for they close early, and all the folks will be gone to bed."

" Are you going thither ? "

" Yes, but I don't want to get there till all the folks *are* gone to bed. I want to slip through the place unnoticed. We sleep in the cart. Keep quiet, then, can't ye ? " said he, dealing a hard blow on the head of one of the little figures before him, which suddenly slipped out of its hood to survey Claude, and betrayed to him the pink eyes and white hair of a diminutive Albino.

" Oh ! don't strike the child ! " cried Claude, hastily.

" Child ? he's older than you think—I've a pair on 'em, and am carrying 'em to the next fair, so, you see, it's my policy to keep 'em close ; for

folks won't pay to see what they can see for nothing. But the little wretches are as malicious and humoursome as toads." And he spitefully hit each of them again, which was answered by a couple of sharp wails.

"You may tell by the very pitch of their shrill pipes how cantankerous they be," said he.

"Well," said Claude, I shall go forward, since my presence seems only to get them into trouble; but remember, my friend, that a merciful man is merciful even to his beast."

"Who says I'm unmerciful?" said the showman, "I'm sure *my* beast yonder is getting a good supper, and rest too."

"Well—don't be harder on your little Albinos than on your old horse."

"It's easy for you to say that, but they're a deal more troublesome to manage. You've no notion how vicious these little shreds of mortality are. Why, if I were to put my little finger between their teeth, they'd bite me like ferrets! they'd bite it off!"

"But do you think they would bite me?"

"Try! I should like to see!" cried the showman, bursting into a fit of laughter, and pulling

the covering aside from the "two faces under a hood." Claude was almost startled at the abrupt revelation of the two queer little monsters, crouched together as if united by some mysterious bond like the Siamese twins, and having their natural peculiarities enhanced by their fantastic dresses of black velvet, fringed and spangled with silver. His attentive look, which doubtless involuntarily conveyed something of his inward feeling of repulsion, was answered by their sharp, silent gaze of defiance; but as he became sensible of this, and remembered how the passions and emotions of young and irrational creatures are often the absolute mirrors of those who are regarding them, and as he remembered that in these diminutive forms were enshrined immortal souls, doubtless stunted like their bodies for want of any the least proper culture, his benevolent heart softened towards the little unfortunates, and expressed itself through his soft and gentle eyes. Gradually their eyes became fixed, and lost their ferret-like expression, as their minds evidently became sensible of the change. He silently, affectionately smiled on them; they clung to one another, without ever removing their strange gaze

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from him; they seemed to feed on that affectionate look, and something like a quiet smile began to dawn over their faces.

"Look," said Claude quietly to the man, without removing his eyes from the Albinos. "Do you see no change?"

"'Tis a miracle!" exclaimed the showman, staring at them open-mouthed.

"No miracle but that of kindness," said Claude. "See how easily you might rule them by the law of love. You might guide them with a rein of silk."

"You'd be a famous fellow," cried the showman, suddenly, "to be a keeper in a lunatic asylum, with that eye of yours! I never saw anything like it."

"There's nothing in the eye, only in the expression."

"Well, expression or whatever it is, I'd give something to have one like it. But I'm not up to that game."

"Try. There's no secret in it."

"Oh, 'tis no use trying, I know. You see, I've a temper."

"Ah, *that's* where the secret is," said Claude.

"Well, try to curb your temper, now you see how useful it will be to you. God's blessing be on you in the endeavour. Good night!"

"Stay! Won't you have a bit of bread and cheese?"

"No, thank you. Good night, my little friends."

And he passed his hand caressingly over the little floss-silk polls of the Albinos. They uttered a low wail of regret at his departure, and the girl held towards him her fragment of bread. Smiling, he bit off a little piece of it, and, as he returned it, put his finger between her teeth. She did not bite him, but laughed, like a little child. He looked expressively at the showman, and they both laughed. "Farewell!" he again cried cheerily; and, waving his hand, passed on.

If it be objected that Claude neglected here and there to press an advantage and avail himself of an opening for doing more than he did, I can only say that he had much ground to get over, that the fields were white unto harvest, and he the solitary reaper; and that his Lord and Master, whom he followed as closely as he could in all things, when urged by the people of various places

to continue longer with them, refused, saying, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also ; for therefore am I sent."

It was now nearly dark, and still Claude was toiling on towards "the wished-for haven where he would be." Suddenly he heard the lumbering sound of a heavy horse advancing along the road from behind him. Presently the horse and his rider passed him, and though the obscurity was now such that he could dimly make out their forms, his own outline, it appeared, was better discerned by the horseman, who having ridden a little in advance, drew his rein for a minute to shout out to him, "The day is coming when all you Blues shall be exterminated ! a second St. Bartholomew ! so, look to it—Aha !" and with a yell of execration he galloped on.

Claude judged this unknown ill-wisher might be the peasant who had caused his expulsion from the coffee-house ; and he augured no good to himself from such a courier preceding him to the next village. Nor were his presentiments groundless. When he reached it, no one would take him in ; many, in fact, had retired for the night and were already asleep ; others, who were shut-

ting up, roughly denied him a lodging, even though he should pay for it in advance. Lonely and weary, he crept on his way, and presently found himself beyond the village, under a sand-bank, a portion of which, having been dug away, left a little cave or den, in which he resolved to find shelter for the night.

“Foxes have holes,” thought he, “and birds of the air have nests; I will, for once, take refuge with the sand-martin.”

He coiled himself up, with his bag behind him, and took out his remaining piece of bread. The stars were coming out brighter and brighter every minute, and he gazed at them with delight; for he had learnt something of them from Mr. Herbert.

“Aisch! Kesil! Mazzaroth!” thought he, “you shine as brightly on me, and shed as sweet influences as you did, thousands of years ago, on Job and his friends. Not *quite* so brightly, perhaps, for I have heard that in that distant region of the east, the air is so clear that your rays emit distinct and divers colours,—as white, yellow, violet, and deep red. You, glorious Sirius, are supposed by the learned to be sixty times as

intrinsically brilliant as our sun. Well may He who created you be called Wonderful! O Lord our Governor! how excellent is thy name in all the world! thou that hast set thy glory above the heavens!"

While Claude lay thus entranced and absorbed in the splendours of the starry host, he became aware of a slight noise a little way off, and the stealthy sound of wheels. Presently all became quiet; but again he learnt that he had neighbours at no great distance from him, who seemed coming to a halt. They spoke in grumbling under-tones, and at length a rough voice said loudly enough for him to hear every syllable, "Philip, where are Conrad's and Josepha's chains and padlocks?"



CHAPTER XIII.

CONRAD AND JOSEPHA.

"**H**OW should I know?" rejoined Philippa sharply, "you took them off yourself in the morning, and most likely left them on the grass."

"Yes, I know I laid them on the grass," returned the showman grumbling, "in order that you might pack them up along with the rest of the traps; and I fancy you'll have to trudge back for them, old woman, if you've left them behind."

"Trudge back yourself, then, if anybody's to trudge!" replied she; and a quarrel ensued, the details of which escaped Claude's ears, till he heard the man end it by saying, "Now then, young 'uns, tumble into your kennels, will ye?" probably accompanying the word with a kick, to judge from the shrill cry that ensued.

Claude guessed pretty well who his neighbours

were, and resolved to keep himself close, for he felt no pleasure in their vicinage. They were evidently a couple of brutal tramps, and he loathed the idea of their poor little captives being kept from straying, like a couple of dogs, by chain and padlock. The party apparently soon settled to rest, for all became quiet as death; and Claude, after gazing up at the stars a while longer, and saying his prayers under his breath, fell into deep sleep. He was awakened at dead of night by a nightmare sensation of a heavy weight on his chest; and the strangeness and discomfort of his position, added to the oppressive feeling under which he was labouring, caused a trembling sense of fear to creep over him, and made the perspiration cover his forehead. He experienced something like terror on discovering that his nightmare was no fancy; that something warm, soft, breathing, and comparatively heavy, actually lay curled up on his chest. It faintly murmured when he touched it, and when with a slight shudder he withdrew his hand and placed it beside him, again it encountered something warm, soft, and alive, nestling close to his side. For a moment the idea of a couple of young lambs or kids

occurred to him ; but the next instant he woke up sufficiently to recognise by the moonlight the little Albinos. They also were awake and peering into his eyes, and immediately began almost to smother him with soft kisses, laying their little fingers on their lips in sign of silence. Then, scrambling down off his reclining body, they muttered something to each other, and shaking back their little spun-glass ringlets, seized one another by the hand, rushed out into the moonlight, and commenced capering, waltzing, and whirling each other round on the broad turf in perfect silence, till Claude thought he could almost realize in them a pair of little fairy elves.

All this was evidently done as much for his gratification as their own, for they frequently looked towards him to see if he were watching them, and then recommenced their little gambols, interlacing their tiny arms, retreating, returning, separating, reuniting, in perfect time, though to no music, but that of their own happy liberated spirits. It seemed the outpouring of infantine joy at their unaccustomed freedom, and of gratitude to him who had been kind to them, though but in a passing caress : and for him they ran

their baby exercises o'er, voluntarily, after the fashion that they had been tutored by blows and starving, to exhibit them to the public. Claude utterly disbelieved what the showman had said with respect to their age, and felt convinced they were very young children; though, to enhance the marvel of their dwarfishness, they were dressed up like adults.

Suddenly they ceased, made a low bow and curtsey, and then, darting back to him, climbed once more up his chest, clasped their little arms about his neck, and fastened their lips to his cheek as if in a perpetual kiss. He smiled, and after yielding for a minute or two to their ardent demonstrations of gratitude, attempted gently to put them off; but lo! they were both fast asleep! Claude was very fond of children; he had pity on these poor little wretches, he was not used to such sudden and caressing attachments, he was somehow melted and won—in short, he let the little creatures alone, sleeping soundly one on each side of him; and presently fell sound asleep himself.

At daybreak he was awakened by hearing the showman exclaim in a voice of dismay—"Hey!

hilloa! why, the kennels are both empty! Philippa, how's this? Here's a pretty business!"

Claude advanced, with an Albino in each hand.

"Here are your little charges, master," said he pleasantly, "they found me out, sleeping under a sand-bank, and didn't go far astray."

"Hallo," said the man with a grim laugh, "they soon tracked you out. . . Well, I owe you something for bringing them back to me, for they cost me a pretty penny. Will you breakfast with us?"

"Gladly," said Claude, who was too hungry to be very fastidious.

"My old lady will have some coffee for us presently; she's lighting a fire to boil it e'en now. I shall want something hot and strong to wind me up a bit, for we've got to turn back to where we were the night before last, to find the padlocks. If I sent *her* back, by herself she'd stop half-way to drink, and pretend she couldn't find 'em; so to what good?"

"To what good, indeed," repeated Claude. "However, I should hardly think it worth your while to undergo all that trouble for a few links of old iron. You might do without them."

"Use a cord, you mean," said the showman; "why, they'd bite it through in no time!"

"Use nothing of the sort," said Claude, "there's no need."

"But we haven't room for 'em in the cart," said the man, "they're obliged to lie under it. See, here's a flap let down in the middle to divide 'em, and a horse-cloth to draw round, a bed-case of tick that rolls up for each of 'em by day, and stuffs with hay or straw at night; what more could they desire?"

"Nothing more, plainly," said Claude, "especially padlocks."

"Ah, you've a maggot about this," said the man, "leave me alone to deal with the vermin; I'm used to it and you're not."

"Here's something to make you less crusty, Fritz," said Philippa, bringing him a steaming mess of coffee in a dirty tin mug.

"Company first," said Fritz; "and yet, what shall I do then for my cup? for we haven't one to spare, and the young 'uns drink out of the same mug. You must go without, Philippa, or wait till I've done."

"You and I can do like the young 'uns, for once, and for manners," says Philippa.

"Thank ye, I decline! What's yours is mine, and what's mine's my own—That's matrimony all the world over."

The little Albinos, without a word, put their cup into Claude's hands, and sat down at his feet, clasping each other and watching him with their singular eyes, as if it were quite breakfast enough for them to see him eat his. He smiled, patted their heads, and looked at Fritz.

"The young 'uns have hit it," said Fritz, "they can wait till we've done. They shall have an extra bit of sugar for it."

"Kindly thought of," said Claude, tasting his coffee, which was as thick as mud. "For my part, I can't bear being harsh with children, and I am sure these are younger than you think. The girl has not changed all her teeth."

"You found that out last night, when you put your finger in her mouth," said Fritz, grinning.

"You're a sharp 'un!"

"Well, I use my eyes, certainly."

"And a precious good pair you've got. I think the more of you for being sharp. All the world's

divided into them that are sharp, and them that are not. Those little 'uns, you've taken such a fancy to, are as sharp as needles."

"Sharp enough to know it is their interest to love and be faithful to those who are kind to them," said Claude. "Take my word for it, if you are kind to them, they will know their own interest too well to run away from you to any one who is not."

"I've heard of chaps going about to make a disturbance about blackamoors being set free," said Fritz; "are you the champion of white blackamoors? Because, these Albinos, you know, come from the same country as the blacks. There's the unnaturalness of it!"

"I never saw, scarcely ever heard of an Albino, till last night," said Claude. "As to unnaturalness, God makes us of what colour He pleases. You and I may not wish we were black, but we could not help it if we were, any more than these Albinos can help being white."

"That's as plain as my wife," said Fritz.

"Now, why should others take advantage of us for what we can't help?" said Claude. "And why should you be less kind to these poor forlorn

children than you would be if they were of the same colour as yourself?"

"How do you know that I am?" said Fritz.

"Why, you would not chain and padlock German children."

"I'd chain and padlock Philippa there, if she proved restive!" replied he, savagely. "There's for you, now!"

"Well, I'm sorry to hear it," said Claude, gulping down his coffee, which he now began to perceive was particularly bad.

"So don't let's harp any longer on that string, if we're to keep friends," said Fritz. "We shall never understand one another."

"That has been partly my fault. I put it to you, just now, as a matter of interest. I will now just hint it is a matter of duty."

"What are you driving at?"

"Merely this, my dear friend—now, hear me patiently. You acknowledge, I suppose, that we both have a master."

"I? I'm my own master! Who do you mean?"

"God."



“ He and I don’t have much to say to one another,” said Fritz, abruptly.

“ He has his eye constantly upon you, nevertheless. He has far more power to hurt you, than you have to hurt these children ; because you can only hurt them in this world, He can hurt you in the next, for ever and ever ; and if He sees you hurting them wantonly, depend on it He will hurt you severely, some of these days. For He has said by the mouth of his own Son, ‘ Who-soever shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were cast into the depth of the sea ! ’ ”

“ I object to this style of talk ! ” said Fritz, gruffly. “ Let’s have no more of it, I say. You’ve had your breakfast out of me, and that’s enough.”

“ Well, I thank you for my breakfast, and wish you a good day. I will not trespass on you any longer. Perhaps, some time or other, we shall meet again.”

“ I hope we shall not.”

Claude arose, bade Philippa farewell, nodded to the Albinos, and pursued his course. The

little creatures, who had wistfully been watching his countenance all the while he spoke, though it was doubtful whether they understood his language, darted after him as fleetly as squirrels, when he departed, and clung to his legs, Fritz, taking up a sharp stone, sent it after Josepha with deliberate aim, and hit her severely on the ankle. The poor little creature shrieked and fell on the ground.

"Master! master! how *can* you be so pitiless?" cried Claude, catching her up in his arms, and tenderly carrying her back in his bosom, fluttering like a little bird that we catch in our hand. He set her down a little way from Fritz; and then approaching him, sat down close to his side and took his hard, horny, reluctant, unyielding hand in his own.

"How could you find it in your heart to do that?" said he, in his gentle voice.

"None of your nonsense," said Fritz, trying to pluck away his hand, but not succeeding. He doggedly averted his face, however, from those searching eyes.

"You think, now," said Claude, "that I have taken some unaccountable fancy to these little

creatures at first sight. It is not so, I assure you. At first, they rather repelled me; it is only that I am naturally fond of children. Had you ever a child?"

"Oh, bother! none of this," said Fritz.

"Aye, that he had, master," said Philippa, stepping up behind him, the hard muscles of her face strongly working, "three of the prettiest dears you ever set eyes on. They all died young, more's the pity."

"Other guess children from these," said Fritz, turning his face away from her, though towards Claude, but without looking up. "They *were* pretty, as she says, not like these little ferrets. Why, now, though you take on about Josepha so, do you know she's as wicked as she's little!"

Claude fixed his eyes on the child upon the grass, who was intently watching him, though she was hardly near enough to hear what passed. He looked into her pink, glittering eyes, as if he would read her very soul: she wonderingly, but unshrinkingly, met his gaze. Claude was accustomed to read the faces of sinners, impenitent and penitent, cloaked and confessed: in this face he detected no vice. "I think," said he to

Fritz, "you do her injustice. Can she understand us?"

"That's one of her vicious ways," said Fritz. "I believe she can. Any but a born natural would have learnt something of German by this time. However, she's like the monkeys, and won't speak; no, nor the boy either, for all my whipping. They'll only jabber together in that lingo of their own."

"Poor little souls!—they love one another?"—

"I fancy so! there's no love lost between 'em in any other quarter, for that matter. Why, they're like a couple of love-birds. Why, I believe nothing would please them better than to be hung up together in a gilt cage, with plenty of sweet things to eat, and liberty to bill and coo all day. See, how the boy is caressing her now—"

"He is stroking her ankle, poor thing—I like him for it."

"Well, I'm sick of all this, myself. You could hardly make greater fuss if I had hit you!"

"Perhaps I should not make so much. Inasmuch as you did it unto the least of these little ones, you did it unto me."

"Fritz! this man speaks like an angel!" cried Philippa, suddenly.

"If you say so again, Philippa, I'll put my fist in your eye."

"I can't help it if you do. I believe Jesus Christ and the apostles would have talked just in the way he does."

"Where there's jealousy, there's love," said Claude, smiling at each in turn. "Come," added he, "there's the church clock striking, and we are making no progress. When I started off just now, I was eager to go towards people I care for very much; but now I have changed my mind, and I shall sit here till you have granted a request of mine."

"You'll waste your time."

"Oh no, it will not be wasted. If it takes me the whole day to bend your will to mine, the day will have been well spent." He smiled in Fritz's face.

"Come, what an obdurate fellow you are!" said he pleasantly, and laying his hand lightly on his shoulder.

—"Tell ye what!" cried Fritz, suddenly, while the expression of his face changed all at once—

"You're the queerest chap ever I fell in with in all my born days, aye, that you are, and yet I like ye!" Claude laughed, "Yes, I do, and there's my hand upon it! Now then,—what do you want?"

"I want you to promise never to chain those little creatures again."

"But what and if they stray?"

"They will not; they shall not." And beckoning to Josepha, who instantly limped towards him, accompanied by the boy, he began a kind of telegraphic communication prompted by the quick instinct of human and divine affection, which she, by the same clue, as readily understood. At first, she evidently recoiled from what he was proposing to her; but at length, yielding entire consent, she stepped forward to Fritz, mutely took his hand, his foot; placed them, first one, then the other, on her little neck; knelt, kissed the hem of his coat, and then went through the same show of submission to Philippa. The boy imitated her exactly, though less spontaneously, therefore less pathetically.

"I'm fairly beat now," cried Fritz, with a short laugh, and then brushing his hand across his eyes,

"Come, you young monkeys—" and he lifted them up and kissed one after the other.

"Now we're friends all round," said he in high good-humour, "so we'll strike our camp without more delay. And I own I'm heartily glad not to have to go back to look after those plaguy chains. Are you going our road, master?"

"Yes, for a mile or two," said Claude, "and if you will put my bag in the cart, I'll carry the little girl on my shoulder."





CHAPTER XIV.

HOME SICKNESS.

“**T**HE child must be covered up, or people will see her gratis,” said Philippa ; whereon Josepha was inducted into a shapeless blouse of coarse canvas, and her head was covered by a large, coarse, flapped straw hat. As Fritz fastened the button of her collar she gently and timidly stroked his hand—the hand that had flung the stone.

“Come now, don’t be too endearing,” said he bluntly ; but the repulsion of the speech was neutralized by his kindly patting her cheek, and lifting her up on Claude’s shoulder.

“I do believe you’ve found me the secret of managing her,” cried he, as the caravan set forth, with Philippa and Conrad seated on the baggage.

"It was a lucky chance, after all, that threw you in my way. Are you going to the fair?"

"No, I turn off, a few miles hence."

"How came you to be sleeping in the open air last night? Was everybody in the village gone to bed?"

"Not everybody, but they would not take me in."

"Beds full, perhaps, on account of the fair?"

"No, they had been set against me."

"Set against you? For what reason?"

Claude briefly told his tale. Fritz became interested in it, and asked him many questions. The adventures of the colporteur drew him out of himself; they were simply but graphically told; and Claude had always the power of winning his hearers' attention and sympathy as long as he steered clear of anything that did not provoke the old quarrel of the natural heart against God;—just as St. Paul found an attentive auditory among the excited Jews of Jerusalem till he began to speak of imparting the gospel privileges to the Gentiles. They gave him audience unto *that* word, and then lifted up their voices and cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live!"

A pause at length ensued, during which Fritz appeared immersed in a train of deep thought. Claude had no disposition to interrupt it. The silence, however, was softly broken, by a low singing sound, as of a little bird, over his head; and Josepha patted his cheeks to let him know how happy she was, and then left off her cooing.

“You make me wish to see Switzerland,” at length said Fritz, abruptly, “perhaps we may go there another summer; and so on through Savoy into Italy. Albinos may be as great or greater wonders there than here.”

Claude resumed the story of his native land, interweaving it here and there with a word of spiritual tendency, just as much as he thought Fritz’s untutored mind able to bear. His companion again became plunged in thought. Presently they came before one of those carved and vulgarly coloured representations of our Saviour on the cross, as large as life, which are frequently to be met with by the road-side on the continent; and which to Protestants have something so repulsive, while to many who have beheld and revered them from infancy, they bring feelings of devotion. Fritz was of the latter sort.

"We'll halt here a moment," said he, stopping the horse. Then, uncovering his rough head, and approaching the sculptured figure with solemnity, he crossed his hands on his breast and said earnestly,—

"Lord Jesus, I here promise and vow in thy adorable presence to keep my word faithfully to this man thy servant, and never to lay hands on or violently strike the children I have under my charge. So help me Saviour and all Saints! Amen."

Claude could not forbear embracing him. Philippa wiped away a tear.

"Here then, we part," said Claude, gently setting Josepha down and kissing her, "and may God's blessing be on you all. I am thankful to have met you, and shall be glad if we meet again."

After a few more cordial words, they each went on their several ways.

And now, each step brought Claude nearer and more near the scene of his approaching triumph. But he must first step out of his path, across some quiet fields, to the house of a woman called Mary. She was one who had been

reclaimed by him long ago from a sinful life ; and he longed to know how it fared with her, and whether she were yet in the faith.

He raised the latch, but the cottage was empty. She laboured in the fields, and had gone forth to her toil, carrying her dinner with her. But her Bible lay on the table, as if it had been used that very morning, for everything else was in its formal place ; and Claude observed with joy that the book betrayed tokens of constant reading. Every page appeared to have been frequently, though carefully turned ; and various favourite passages were marked, one by a ribbon, another by a dried flower or leaf, another by a bit of thread or tiny scrap of paper ; while some pages were doubled in half, others turned down at the corner above, others at the corner below. There could be no doubt of its being the *vade mecum* of a Bible Christian. Claude's heart rejoiced ; he left a scrap of paper on the cover, on which he had written, " The Lord be with you, Mary ! " and went on his way.

The vintage having now begun, all hands were busy, and it was not to be supposed that many persons would be in their homes before sunset.

A few scattered homekeepers, however, there would be, those who were sick and infirm, or who had charge of the sick or of young children. Among them lay Claude's harvest. As he passed a vineyard, a boy gathering grapes cried, "Father! there goes the man who stood by your bedside when you were dying of the cholera!" "Can it be Claude?" says the father. "Yes! yes! Claude it is!" And instantly father and son were embracing him.

"Where are you going, Claude? Are you going to our village, Claude? Will you abide there to-night? And to-morrow, and the night after? Yes, yes, you must! We have a nice chaff bed and clean upper-sheet for you, and soup by the fire. Tarry with us you must!" "Oh, how sorry I am," cries the boy, "that you have come just when we are so busy with the vintage! We shall not be home before dusk, but grandfather is in the house, unable to stir from his arm-chair, and he will be right glad to see you." "And the news of your coming will soon spread," said the man, "for I shall tell every one I see, and it will run along from one group of vintagers to another, so that you will have a famous con-

gregation this evening. We have gone on renting that room over-against the baker's ever since you were here, though the landlord has raised the rent two or three times. There we meet, four evenings out of seven, to consult the Scriptures. We are packed as close as figs, and the little room gets as hot as fire; for Heinrich has left the iron-foundry on purpose to school us and preach to us, on week-days as well as Sabbaths, and you have no notion how popular he is. But, nothing in comparison with you! You are quoted among us as an apostle; and joyfully will he yield you his reading-desk while you are among us, and sit at your feet. Farewell, till sundown! I dare stay no longer; but eat this delicious bunch of grapes as you go along."

Claude gladly accepted the fruit and went on, full of pleasant thought. In the almost deserted village he went straight to the cottage of the man to whom he had been speaking; and, as he raised the latch, he heard a feeble voice within slowly repeat, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He shall feed me in a green pasture." It was "the old grandfather in his easy chair," reading the Scriptures to himself. An elderly,

unmarried daughter had him in charge, and was busied in household work. They joyfully received Claude, asked him a hundred questions, and made him sit down and partake of a plentiful meal. When he had answered their inquiries, he had many questions to put in return; and after their curiosity had been mutually satisfied, and as the afternoon wore away, the conversation took a more profitable turn, and Claude found himself deep in spiritual conference with the old man, who was, indeed, his "son in the faith," though his senior by many, many years.

At sundown the peasants came trooping home from the vineyards, and the cottage was completely beset by joyous welcomers. When the clamour of their greetings had subsided, they unanimously agreed to disperse for supper, and then to reunite in the hired room to hear Claude read to them. In another hour, they were crowding together for admission, and found Claude already at his post, conversing with Heinrich.

"Are you all here, dear people?" he said.

"All here, dear teacher," cried many voices.

"Since, then, we have met together, to consider the blessed oracles of God," said he,

“let us begin with asking his blessing on our deed.”

And down they all knelt. When they arose as many as could be accommodated with seats sat as close together as they could; the rest stood behind: every eye was fastened upon him. He opened the Bible.

What a rare accomplishment it is to read well! What a power it gives us to touch and rend the human heart! How singular that such an art should be so little improved! Claude was gifted by God with a pleasant and harmonious voice, capable of any inflection, and with a pure taste which needed only to be cultivated. During his close, personal attendance on his accomplished and gifted master, Mr. Herbert had, for his own benefit, in the first place, given Claude a few simple hints in elocution which had greatly improved his reading; and when he found the desire that was in him to become a reader and distributor of the Scriptures throughout the world at large, he thought it a sacred duty, and found it his greatest pleasure to cultivate Claude's talent to the utmost. Claude, always a simple-hearted, single-minded fellow, was far from over-rating, or indeed, from sufficiently

estimating his gift : he felt so humbled at the consciousness of his want of scholastic training and critical knowledge of divinity, that he considered himself one of the very humblest labourers in God's vineyard ; but yet he felt he had a call to that particular field of work, as emphatically as any trained student of whom that solemn test is required at his ordination ; and, strong in the strength the Spirit gives, he felt no embarrassment in his vocation, so assured was he, that, divine assistance being humbly and earnestly sought, the right words would always be put into his mouth at the right moment. Thus, he never hesitated ; neither hurried nor paused, except as earnest feeling dictated ; never stammered, ranted, or strung words together for the sake of gaining time. He was so full of his message, that he never wanted new and fervent thoughts : they clothed themselves in simple, unaffected language. Thus it was that his hearers sat around him, enchained, spell-bound : no eye drooped with sleep ; no frame lounged or wriggled with restlessness ; all the senses were alert ; you might have heard a pin drop whenever he drew breath.

He read ; and then he commented on what he

read ; and then he read again. “ Have you had enough, dear friends ? ” now and then he said. “ No, dear Claude, pray go on.” And he read again.

“ Have you had enough ? It is now growing late—you must be weary.”

“ Well, perhaps we have had enough this night, since you will read to us again.”

“ Then, let us pray.”

And then they dispersed to their lowly habitations.

For a week or more, Claude continued among them, and then pursued the like course in neighbouring villages, “ confirming the churches.” It gladdened his soul to see the fruit of his labours. At length, as the season advanced, he felt he had dwelt among them long enough ; he must visit other places also. He had as yet sold few books, for the people were already well supplied. He therefore started on a new course, intending to break fresh ground ; and purposing, when he had made a certain round and got rid of all his stock, to make a detour on his way back to Rotterdam, and see how it fared with Hans and Lisa, and Mother Agnes and the Schillers. And with this

purpose in view, he journeyed for some weeks, meeting with the usual amount of obstacles in a new and sealed land.

All at once, his strength was taken from him. The mysterious national disease of home sickness, the languishing for his country, fell upon him. His nerves relaxed, his appetite fled, showers of tears continually fell from his eyes. In vain he tried to rouse himself; he struggled, he prayed: the *maladie de pays* was on him. If he heard a bird sing, he wept; if he heard a child laugh, he wept; if he heard trickling water, or saw a distant blue mountain, or cows, goats, and sheep feeding in a valley, he wept. He took shame to himself, and tried to fix his thoughts on Lisa at her cottage door, feeding her pigeons; and Hans reading his Bible; and he turned his steps towards them, and resolved to go to them at once, but all in vain. An impulse stronger than his strength was pulling him another way. He must see his old home, his mountains, his valleys, his roaring rivers and plashing cascades, or lie down and die. And why not? Was there any sin in it? If any duty had impelled him to go elsewhere, he would have obeyed it or have consented to die; but there was

none. There was no reason why he should not go home ; and directly he had settled this in his mind, though it was in the middle of the night, and he was in a strange house, he felt a strong desire to start off at once. *This* was an impulse, however, he *could* resist ; and the more he reflected on the easiness and innocence of following his inclinations, the calmer and more composed he became ; till, at length, after all his foregone tossings and troubles, he fell into peaceful sleep.

He awoke another man. His nervousness and restlessness were gone ; his bodily strength was recruited ; his mind had recovered its balance. He fell on his knees and thanked God for the change.

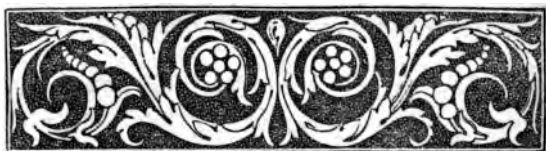
“ What poor creatures we are ! ” thought he ; “ how infirm of purpose ! how weak and inconstant in action ! How, amidst our grandest enterprises and resolutions, the Lord of all the heavens must smile, to know that by touching with his little finger a single nerve and setting it thrilling, he can spoil and divert all our designs ! There is no surety, but in Him.”

Then he made the few simple preparations for his journey—he had already received a remittance

from Rotterdam ; and the purchase money of the books he sold would help to pay his way. He wrote a few lines to Mr. Vandervelt, to mention the course he proposed taking, exchanged his German Bibles for French ones, and then set forth.

Just as he started, in the animation of restored strength, the thought occurred to him—" May I not, in this returning vigour, cheat myself, and go to Hans and Lisa after all ?" But a thrill told him he might *not* : and without a second moment's wavering, he set his face towards his native mountains.





CHAPTER XV.

THE PAYS DE VAUD.

ON the banks of the Sambre, Claude fell in with a fair. There were shows of wild beasts, with horrid pictures painted outside, and the usual adjuncts of drinking-booths, cake-stalls, and pedlary. But what caught his eye almost immediately, was a canvas booth with a gaudy flag streaming from the top, and a placard hung outside, notifying that two of the wonderfullest, beautifullest, and remarkablest pigmy Albinos, from the Coast of Africa, were to be seen inside, for the low sum of three kreuzers. Claude thought he should like to see his little friends again, and judge by their looks how they were used; as Fritz's adherence to his vow had had now some weeks' trial. He therefore paid his money, value a

penny English, and entered the booth, which was lighted by a lamp from the centre, which threw its moderate effulgence on the performers, and left the audience in comparative obscurity. Philippa took the entrance-money, but as several were entering at the same time, she did not pay sufficient attention to Claude to recognise him. Fritz was trilling a wild, monotonous air on a pipe, and beating a little tabor with his feet, while the little Albinos were dancing and capering in the same style as Claude had seen them do by moonlight. They really seemed dancing for amusement; and when their performance was concluded, (it could not be expected to last very long for a penny,) Josepha sprang gaily into Fritz's arms, and he smoothed her flossy hair, and gave her a piece of gingerbread, which she immediately divided with Conrad, keeping the smallest half for herself. As Claude passed out, he spoke to Philippa, and said he was glad to see her charges look so well. She answered him cordially and cheerfully, and said that Fritz had been unwontedly good-humoured of late, which was perhaps partly owing to the children having drawn large audiences, as well as to Claude's intervention.

He proceeded on his way, and in due time entered and traversed France ; "*la belle France*," its people call it, just as we speak of merry England ; and as the Jews once loved to call their country, "the pleasant land." To Claude, whose heart was now light, France did indeed appear very cheerful and beautiful ; but the Alps were summoning him forward, and he hurried on with the more resolution because the weather, which had hitherto been fine, was beginning to break up, and cloudy skies were threatening heavy rains. Claude made more haste than good speed, for he over-taxed his strength, and was obliged to rest for some days. Then he resumed his journey, and began to climb the ridge that divided France from his native land. The weather was still inclement ; and about half way up he met goatherds coming down, who told him snow had already fallen. They added that the pass, having partially frozen, was extremely slippery, and, as the day now verged towards noon, they advised him to proceed no further till the next morning, but pause in some shepherd's hut. A strong feeling of desire, however, urged him forward ; on he went, therefore, with a light springing step, insensible of fatigue. The country he had


left lay mapped below him, its towns and villages shrunk to the dimensions of toys, its rivers wandering hither and thither like ribbons. It still glowed in the bright sunshine, but he was already entering the deep shadow of the mountain; and this dark shadow continued deepening and darkening and lengthening, and gradually stealing over the champaign he had left. Now the distant sunlight scarcely gilds the hill-tops: now it is quite gone. How gloomy has everything suddenly become! But Claude has neither leisure nor inclination to look behind him; he pushes right on, as if the avenger of blood were at his heels, or an immortal reward before him—alas! do those with an immortal reward before them, press on *as he did*? The path skirts a precipice of several hundred feet in depth; and at every step he dislodges small loose stones which fall over the brink, and splash in the unseen river far below.

But now a mountain mist begins to descend, and wrap him in its chilly mantle. What is worse, it thickens into a fog so dense that he becomes embarrassed and strays off the direct path. He is now following the track to some cowherd's chalet, as the steepness and uneven-

ness of the ground plainly warn him, but he is perplexed how to regain the right path, and waits. By-and-by, the mist rolls off, and he dimly makes out his course and painfully retraces his steps; but the blackness of night is now drawing on, without moon or star. The path is now becoming extremely slippery, and he is approaching the region of snow, which seems to emit an uncertain sort of ghostly light.

Claude is now heartily sorry he did not take the goatherds' advice, and wait till the next day; but there is no help for it; he has lost precious time by straying from his path, but he must push forward.

Gradually the night became somewhat clearer, the snow whiter and whiter; but he was bewildered by it, and could not be sure of his bearings. Sometimes he stepped off the path into a hole, and plunged knee-deep in snow; at other times he stumbled over a concealed fragment of rock, and nearly fell. He now became oppressed by intense headache; and, from having long been unaccustomed to the glare of the snow, he saw what seemed like great drops of blood before him, whichever way he looked. Blundering



onward, with continual prayer in his heart to God for strength and direction, and a continually increasing feeling of exhaustion and depression, his foot struck a stone which immediately fell over a precipice close to him, and thundered into a ravine below. At the same moment he lost his balance, and in his effort to save his bag, which swung round to the side nearest the chasm, he so nearly fell into the horrible gulf that he stood with violently beating heart, appalled at the fate he had so narrowly escaped. A sigh of thankfulness supplied the place of a prayer; but he trembled from head to foot, and felt convinced he must not go further that night. Groping his way along the rocky wall on the side furthest from the precipice, he presently felt a little cleft in it, in which he could take shelter. Unbuckling a coarse wrapper which was strapped across his shoulders, he rolled himself in it, covered his face with his pocket-handkerchief like a veil, placed his bag under him for a seat, put an acidulated lozenge in his mouth, and in this comfortless guise prepared to keep himself awake till daylight. He tried to hum a hymn, but did not like the sound of his own voice at all, and speedily ceased. He could

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hear the bark of a distant wolf ; but it was on the opposite side of the chasm.

At length the moon arose, enveloped in clouds, like a beautiful mourner veiled in weeds. Presently she threw off this mourning veil, and shone gloriously forth, like a monarch casting off disguise ! Immediately the whole face of the snow-clad, scenery seemed changed. Claude raised his veil, which was stiffened with his frozen breath, and gazed about him in transport, till his headache returned with such intensity that he was glad to cover up his face again. He was neither hungry nor thirsty, and had often been more weary ; but seldom so oppressed with sadness. He stamped, and beat his arms against one another, to keep his blood from stagnating.

After a long, long night, day dawned, cold and grey. The clouds seemed to hang about the east like lazy servants in some great lord's antechamber ; but anon, the lord of that chamber, the glorious bridegroom came forth, and dispersed them right and left. Claude had already sprung to his feet and was threading the pass ; and oh ! how his heart beat with ecstasy when the happy valley burst upon him flooded in sunlight ! “ *Non*

scese, nò, precipito"—he stepped not, no, he darted down the mountain, now through black pine woods, now across dizzy bridges, till at length he reached the dwelling of his friend Franz.

Suzette was just issuing forth with her milk-pail. She uttered an exclamation of joy on seeing Claude; but, at the same moment, he fell senseless at her feet. Suzette screamed with terror, and Franz rushed out with his gun.

"What is it? A bear? a wolf?" cried he.
"Ha! Claude Malan!"

On raising him, they perceived blood trickling from his mouth; and with some difficulty they carried him in and laid him on a bed. Claude, in his violent effort to save his books and himself during the night, when his foot slipped, had, unknown to himself, broken a blood-vessel; and the change of temperature from extreme cold to comparative warmth had occasioned his swoon.

When he recovered his senses, Franz forbade him to speak. He faintly smiled and complied. "I know what will cure you, my dear fellow," said Franz, "we must diet you on raisins and grapes. Nothing else shall you get of your

stingy hosts till your lungs have quite healed ; and, what is more, not a word must you tell us of all you have seen and done since you left us, though we love your long stories so much. Instead of that, you must listen to me while I prose away about the wolves and the chamois, and the vintage, and the silkworms, and the cows, heifers, and calves ; and when you are tired of that, Suzette shall sing to her guitar. Here you must lie by all the winter, till you get quite strong and well ; and right glad shall we be to have you with us, I can tell you !—But you don't need to be told that, old boy !”

Franz spoke truth. Here was Claude obliged to remain, many a day and many a week, unable to reach the little church he had so overtaxed himself to enter ; unable, for some time, even to cross the threshold. But if his body were inactive, his mind was in perfect peace ! All his feverish irritability, his restlessness, his despondency, had disappeared ! He was in his own land, among his own people ; and with exquisite sensations of delight, he received their tender cares. It was of little moment to him, that their common room had neither chimney nor glazed

window—they were warm enough at night, shut in with the cow, the calf, two goats, and four sheep, which were only penned off by a partition that did not reach the ceiling. Franz got some planks, and made Claude a little closet in the corner, hardly occupying more ground-surface than his bed of dried leaves; yet Claude was content, for his father's own cottage had boasted no better accommodation. And these humble people were even, among the simple Vaudois, accounted well to do; their upper room contained store of cleanly, well-scoured milk vessels, cheese presses, and churns, a loom and spinning-wheel, a dozen or more black loaves on the hanging shelf, and a flitch of bacon hanging from the ceiling. They whose Moderator or Bishop studied without a fire, with a cloak cast over his shoulders, were not likely to complain of the want of a chimney, and their minds were stored with theological lore and spiritual wisdom, though books were so scarce among them as to be circulated from house to house leaf by leaf.

When the news of Claude's arrival spread through the valley, many old acquaintance, with the good pastor, or *barbe*, at their head, found

their way to him, and beguiled the monotony of his confinement by their talk. One had to tell of a wedding, another of a market, another of a day's hunting. No one came empty handed ; so that Franz and Suzette never had so great a variety in their larder. One brought a piece of bear's flesh, another a bag of chestnut flour, another a basket of grapes, or a goat's-milk cheese, or a fowl, or a few eggs. Franz meanwhile, when he had come in from his day's work, wove at his loom, or carved wood, or read a chapter in the Bible ; and Claude took to wood-carving, too, and helped to make up his store of toys for the spring fair. He also gave the children lessons in reading and writing ; and towards the end of winter, when he was pretty nearly well, he had quite a little school of adults and young girls and lads, whom he gladly instructed gratuitously. In short, so happily and swiftly did this winter pass, that all were sorry when it broke up, and Claude was well enough to prepare to recommence his wanderings. He started, in the first place, for La Tour ; little foreseeing what dangers and tribulations there awaited him.



CHAPTER XVI.

CLAUDE IN PRISON.

“**B**ETTER come back in the autumn, Claude, and take a Swiss wife,” cried Suzette, as she stood at her cottage door with her infant in her arms, watching him depart.

“I don’t know that any one would have me,” replied he, cheerfully.

“Oh, nonsense! Any one would have you! Louison, Marguerite, Victorine”

“For shame, for shame, Suzette! I won’t hear another word more! Good bye!—”

—“Well, don’t walk too fast, especially uphill, for fear of consequences; remember, you’re not very strong yet!—He doesn’t hear me, I do believe,” added she, lowering her voice, after shouting after him; “what a pace he is going at!”

Claude cheerily walked on to Bobbio, where he bade farewell to various friends, and then he proceeded to La Tour, keenly alive to the beauty of the budding spring and the long withheld delight of exercise in the open air. But he was not very strong yet ; and he found it necessary to slacken his pace, before he reached the end of his six-mile stage. His mind was full of thick-coming memories of the stirring scenes that had occurred in that valley in the old persecuting times, and he prayed to God in his heart that they might never be revived.

Having reached La Tour, he went to the Moderator's house, to bid him adieu ; and not finding him at home, he left a message for him, and then crossed the little street to a shop immediately opposite, to buy a new handkerchief. While he was choosing one, the woman of the shop suddenly plucked off his hat ; he looked up at her with surprise, and seeing no advantage to himself to be derived from the arrangement, coolly put it on again. The woman, who was a Roman Catholic, bluntly remarked—" You'd better have submitted, and may get into trouble for this. Why could not you pull off your hat, for manners, if for nothing

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better, when the Host was being carried by? The priest saw you, I am sure, out of the corner of his eye, and you know the laws require heretics as well as Catholics within thirty yards distance, to uncover."

"I was not aware the Host was passing," said Claude, "nor did I remember the law." And looking out of the shop-door, he saw a priest and two or three little boys, forming rather a poor apology for a procession, going down the street. He concluded his purchase, and left La Tour without any further delay; and had proceeded about half-a-mile on his road, when he heard himself called to from behind, and, the next minute, a couple of gens d'armes came up and roughly collared him. He mildly inquired the reason of their apprehending him. They replied, "You will soon learn that of the magistrate . . . our business is only to take you before him. However, we know very well that you are the profane fellow who kept your hat on just now before the Host."

"Well—my journey will only be an hour delayed," said Claude.

"Don't be too sure of that," said the other

gendarme, "our magistrate may put a spoke in your wheel that shall hinder it from rolling on for some time to come. However, it is not our business to speak to you."

And they walked on in silence, a few boys and idlers gradually collecting into a little body-guard around them.

When Claude entered the presence of the magistrate, he found himself confronted by the shop-woman of La Tour, and by two of the youths who had made up the procession. These all bore witness against him that he had kept on his hat; and the shop-woman alleged in addition, that when she, out of humanity, removed it for him, he immediately replaced it, and expressed no contrition for his disrespect, intentional or otherwise. The magistrate demanded his name, birth-place, and occupation; and finding that he hawked Bibles from house to house,—“This is evidently a malignant fellow,” said he to his clerk, “and I don’t think it any honour to La Tour to have been his birth-place, nor to Bobbio to have supplied his education; therefore my opinion is, that we shall do the community at large good service by committing Mr. Claude Malan to the prison

of Fenestrella for the term of three calendar months."

"That is a hard sentence, sir," said Claude, "How am I to be maintained there, without food or money, thirty miles away from my nearest friends?"

"People should think of those matters before they commit offences," replied the magistrate.— "You may let your friends, if you have any, know of your position."

"All the Protestants of Bobbio, and many in La Tour, are my friends," said Claude. "The Moderator knows me well."

"I recognise no such title as Moderator," said the magistrate, "though I know who you mean. To Fenestrella you must go."

"And what is to become of my Bibles, sir? Your gendarmes have my bag."

"It will be time enough to restore it to you when you come out. You won't want to sell Bibles in prison."

"But to *read* the Bible, sir!"

"Bah! you will be better without it. Your mind will have time to recover itself."

"Well sir, . . . luckily for me, there is a large portion of it you cannot deprive me of."

“ Concealed about your person ? ”

“ No, sir, *here*,” touching his forehead.

“ Ah, that’s the way with you Vaudois—heretics in grain ! there’s no washing the mischief out of you. Gendarmes, remove the prisoner.”

As Claude was removed, he looked about for some one who might know him ; but all the labouring men were at their work. He caught the eye of a little boy, however, who was wistfully watching him, and called out to him—

“ Pierre ! tell your father and tell the Moderator, and, if you can run over to Bobbio, tell Franz Millot, that I am going to the prison at Fenes-trella, for three months.”

The boy nodded, and Claude went off under guard. He was placed in a cart, and one gendarme seated himself beside him, while the other drove. As they passed between Pignerol and St. Germain, Claude, who had hitherto maintained silence, signed towards the latter place. “ I shall not fare so ill as the good old pastor of St. Germain,” said he.

“ What happened to him ? ” said the gendarme.

“ The fathers of the monastery got him into their power by a stratagem,—he was told that one:

of his flock was dying and wanted his spiritual assistance. On his way he was beset ; he took to flight, but a shower of bullets brought him to the ground. The report of fire-arms brought a crowd of his people around him ; and while they were lamenting over him as he lay disabled and bleeding, the ambuscade burst forth and carried off the whole party prisoners to the monastery. Here the good old *barbe* was exhorted to recant ; and, as he would not, he was *burnt* : and his unhappy fellow-prisoners were compelled to carry the faggots that were to consume him to the stake. He died, glorying that he was counted worthy to suffer for the cross of Christ. In the evening, when the monks passed the pile of ashes on their way to vespers, the embers, it is said, became suddenly red, as if silently testifying against them."

"That was a Protestant miracle, I suppose," said the gendarme. "Bah ! who believes such rubbish as that ?"

"Their excited imaginations had probably something to do with it," said Claude. "I do not insist upon it, for the faith and constancy of the martyrs of our religion need no fabulous adjuncts."

"I suppose you mean to say *we* have had no martyrs?" said the gendarme.

"No, you have had many before heathenism was worn out; which was after Christianity became corrupted," said Claude.

"Don't you corrupt us," said the gendarme; "you're a prisoner now, not a preacher."

Claude held his peace, and they journeyed on in silence.

—"I remember," says the author of *Picciola*, "that in traversing the Alps on foot with my knapsack on my back, I paused in pensive contemplation before a mountain torrent not far from the Col Rodoret. The noise which it made in its course, the cascades into which it formed itself, the various colours with which its waters were stained, the enormous blocks of rock which it had undermined and separated without entirely dislodging, the trees which it swept away in its eddying course, held me for some time transfixed in profound meditation. This torrent was the Clusone. I pursued its banks, and arrived with it in one of the four Protestant valleys known as the refuges of the ancient Vaudois. My torrent was no longer turbulent; it flowed with strength, but

yet with decorum, as it approached the walls of Fenestrella.

“Here then, I beheld Fenestrella, celebrated by the massive forts crowning the two heights between which the town is built. These forts, which communicate by covered ways, had been partly dismantled during the republican wars; but one of them, nevertheless, had been repaired, and converted into a state prison.”

In this fortress was Claude to be shut up for three months. Clouds and mists surrounded the base of the crags on which it stood, and seemed to suspend it in mid air. The gaoler, having read his committal, and finding it was for a trifling offence committed by an obscure person, carelessly observed he supposed he did not mean to pay for a separate room. Claude, in reply, placed in his hand the few sous he possessed, telling him it was all he had,

“This will not go far towards your keep,” said the gaoler contemptuously.

“I have no more,” said Claude, “and I can subsist on bread and a few raisins.”

“If you have the bread without the raisins, your money will last longer,” said the gaoler; “it

is lucky for you that the weather is too warm for you to want fuel." And he turned him into the common yard.

The few prisoners who were loitering about in it, immediately collected round him, glad to relieve the monotony of their confinement by looking at a new face. They were squalid and repulsive in appearance. They asked him what he came to prison for, and when he told them, they pitied him and called it a shame. They asked him what his occupation was, and when he said hawking Bibles, they laughed. He told them he had originally been a chamois hunter. They said there was some fun in that, and began to ask him questions. He answered them cheerfully, and soon got into some of his hunting-stories, which he spun out and made as entertaining as he could, knowing they would now be his capital. They became interested, called him a good fellow, offered him spirits, and, when he declined them and said he lived by rule and had broken a blood-vessel, they offered him bread and grapes, which he thankfully accepted. By night-fall they were all good friends. When a squabble occurred, he mediated; when some of them swore, he said,

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"Come, if you say that, I shall tell you no more chamois stories. You have not heard the best, so it's to your interest to humour me." On which they laughed, and forbore.

Within an hour of bed-time, he said, "Come, this is the time I always read the Bible and pray. Shall I do so aloud or to myself?"

"What a joke!" cried one, "why you have no Bible."

"Shut your eyes, and you won't know that. Come, humour me for once. Behave decorously awhile, and if you don't like my ministrations to-night, it will be time enough to protest against them to-morrow."

"Agreed," said they, and drew around him. "I am going," said Claude, with an inflection of great seriousness in his voice, "to repeat the eighteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and may God bless it to all our souls, for his dear Son's sake." They were hushed and still. Never had Claude's intonations been more perfect, his emphasis more impressive, or more winning. His words distilled like dew on thirsty ground. As soon as he reached the end, beholding every eye fixed on him with deep attention, he said, "Let

us pray!" and the next moment every knee was on the ground. They had all just risen when the gaoler came to lock them up for the night, and wondered to find them all so quiet. "Lord God, I thank thee!" whispered Claude, as he lay down on his hard pallet.

Next morning, after their meagre breakfast, all were yawning or idling about the yard. "How stupid this is!" cried Claude, "I would rather plait the straw I slept upon, or carve a piece of wood, than do nothing. Let us all try to invent something to do, and he whose invention is the brightest, shall be voted the king of good fellows and receive public thanks."

Their fancies were tickled; and one after another hit upon some way of employing their few and miserable resources. "Anything is better than nothing," said Claude, "let us make trial of all; and, since you are good enough to lend me your knife, I will carve this bit of stick into an old woman's head. Or stay,—would any one like to learn to read or write?"

"Where are our books and copy-books to come from?" said one.

"Leave that to me," said Claude; "why, your

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coat is so dusty we might write upon your back ; and mine's not much better," observing that they all laughed. " But the flag-stones will do for slates, if we had but slate-pencils, or charred sticks."

A substitute for both was hit upon by an ingenious fellow, who was rather elated by the encomiums he received for his talent ; and to work they went, all except a select few, who preferred a quiet game of pitch-and-toss. While Claude could thus find "sermons in stones and good in everything," it was no wonder that to a glimmering consciousness that he was a very good man, they added a lively conviction that he was a very good fellow. While they were all hard at their new employment, he suddenly cried—

" Hold ! Enough !"

" Why so ?" said they in surprise.

" Too much of a good thing is good for nothing," said Claude. " Why should not we study variety ? There was a famous Jansenist, M. de St. Victor, who during a long term of solitary confinement, contrived such variety in his employments, which were all mental, that he literally found himself in want of *time*. Ours is

not solitary confinement, we have much more variety at our command than he had, and we have the advantage of hearing a clock strike which will enable us to regulate our occupations methodically. What is to hinder us from having an hour for reading, an hour for writing, an hour for walking, an hour for talking, an hour for singing, three or four hours for handicraft labour, and an hour for prayer? There's the day divided at once."

"I think, master," said one of the pitch-and-tossers, who had just been beaten, "you want to be king of the court."

"No, I don't," said Claude readily. "*You* shall be king, and I'll be your chaplain! Nicole shall be treasurer; Andr  shall be commander-in-chief; Arnould shall be intendant of police; Gaspard shall be master of the works; Picard shall be . . . master of the band."

"If I'm to be treasurer," said Nicole, "where's the treasure to come from?"

"From the fines, to be sure! Every one that swears or uses bad language is to fine a sous."

"That's good of *you*, who have no money!"

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“Wait till I incur the fine!” said Claude laughing. “Arnould is controller of public order, he shall levy the fines.”

“Why, I shall have to fine myself!” cried Arnould.

“All the greater fun, if you choose to incur the penalty,” said Claude.

“’Tis but child’s play, after all,” said André.

“Well, and are not leap-frog and pitch-farthing child’s play? You don’t despise *them*.”

“Anything for a change!” cried Picard. “So, hail to king Mathurin, the first of his name, and to Claude his new chaplain!”





CHAPTER XVII.

FENESTRELLA.

“**C**LAUDE!” said young Pierrot in a low voice, while the others were engaged in an athletic game for which the colporteur had neither inclination nor strength, “these men are tolerant of you as long as you amuse them, and you may even acquire a certain degree of power over them for good ; but I—I like you for yourself ! I am here for a worse crime than any one of them has committed, and loathe myself for it ; and yet I love better things than they do, and am sorry beyond expression for what I have done.”

—And the poor young fellow told him a tale of woe ; how that he had loved, and had been deceived, and had been jealous, and had suspected a wrong party, and had fallen upon and nearly killed an innocent man.

—“ And though he lives,” pursued Pierrot, “ my crime was all the same. I wished him dead and was ready to kill him when I felled him and beat him about the head ; and when they brought me here, I did not care what became of me, since Annette had been false. I did not care to live, for there seemed nothing worth living for ; and though I was a Protestant, I felt I had disgraced my people ; so I held close and went on here just like the rest. But though I’ve not virtue nor courage enough to take the first part, I’ll always be your second ; so reckon upon me. I’ll always back you up. There are two or three more Protestants among us, put in for offences as trifling as yours ; and I fear they are all you can permanently reckon upon ; for the next time the priest comes (who does not come very often), the others will go to him to confess ; and confess other people’s faults, or what they consider such, as well as their own. So he’ll soon know all about you ; and then he’ll warn them against you, and they’ll keep apart from you, you’ll see ! ”

Pierrot’s fears, however, were not fully realized. Firstly, it was a good while before the priest came

at all; secondly, Claude had meantime grown such a favourite that not one of his companions would speak ill of him; thirdly, the gaoler, who was aware of a great change among his charges, and thought it no sin to play eaves-dropper and hear if any mischief were brewing, became a decided patron of Claude, and felt heartily obliged to him for reducing his undisciplined companions to order; fourthly, when the priest heard the fact reluctantly confessed, that a Protestant prisoner was obtaining great influence over them, the fact was so neutralised and palliated by various accompanying statements, that he thought it best to content himself with a very gentle charge to his penitents to beware of being led astray by their ears, let the charmer charm never so wisely. Finally, he played eaves-dropper himself two or three times, without being able to detect any harm, and held a colloquy with Claude, mildly reminding him that the old law for burning a Protestant minister who attempted to convert a Catholic had never been repealed, and that though he was a layman, he exposed himself to very stringent penalties. Claude said so little in reply, and that little so

gently, that the old man could find no pretext for attacking him; and being really of a mild and pacific disposition, thought he might as well leave the matter alone.

Meanwhile, Claude, with a rusty nail blackened with a mixture of soot and grease for his implement, had written out nearly all the Gospel of St. John on the walls of the yard. This was the text-book by the aid of which he taught his scholars to read, and to commit portions of Scripture to memory. He told them this was a golden opportunity, which might never occur to them again; and even the most sluggish were aroused to a little exertion, while the ardent made rapid and animating progress. While all were his friends, Pierrot was, distinctively, his friend; who hung upon everything he said, sifted everything he could out of him, reasoned with him, learned of him, and aided him in every way he could. Had it not been for the generosity of these poor fellows, and the gaoler's humanity, Claude would have fared ill at the commencement of his captivity; for his friends at Bobbio and La Tour could not immediately journey to Fenestrella, nor obtain access to him when they got there;

but Franz at length made his appearance loaded with a miscellaneous collection of good things which enabled Claude to feast those who had shared their own scanty supplies with him. And moreover Franz brought a purse, containing a small sum indeed, but sufficient for the colporteur's wants during the remainder of his imprisonment, which had been collected for him in *sous* among the peasants of Bobbio. He accepted this with as much simplicity as gratitude; for the workman is worthy of his hire, and he knew that in spite of the ostensible reason of his punishment, he was in reality suffering for his testimony to the cross of Jesus Christ.

And now the time came when he was to regain his liberty, to the no small regret of all those whom he was leaving behind. How earnestly, how affectionately did he exhort them to keep up to the mark he had set before them, and press onward, instead of falling off as soon as his personal influence was withdrawn. As for Pierrot, he was steadfastly resolved to become a colporteur as soon as his term was out, which would be not long after Claude's; and he persuaded him to await him before he

crossed the Alps, that they might travel awhile together.

With a sense of the blessing of liberty which nothing but the loss of it can give, Claude joyously descended the rock of Fenestrella, thanking God as he went. At the foot of the steep road, a man, sitting on the bank, started up and spoke to him; and to his no small amazement, he found himself greeted by John Perry.

“The hour and the man!” cried John, seizing him by the hand, and working his arm like a pump-handle, “you little thought to see me, I fancy, but I’ve been watching for you this hour and more. I knew you were here and would come out to-day,—have known it some weeks. My lord is stopping in Fenestrella on purpose to see you. Oh, what a lot of things I have to tell you to be sure! I must begin with the end and end with the beginning. When we got into the Protestant valleys a fortnight ago, we found all the Vaudois in a ferment about your captivity, and making quite a personal concern of it; every man taking it home to his own hearth and heart. Well, my lord thought the transaction such a shame, even before he remembered who you

were (*I* brought that to his mind), that he took it up quite warmly and spoke of it in the public rooms, and called on M. Peyrani and M. Bert, and wrote to the intendant of the district, to beg him to let you out. It was no go! In prison you must stay, in spite of Lord Coldingham's fuming and chafing, and calling it a disgrace to the times. So, finding your time was almost out, he resolved to wait quietly in the valleys, and see you had fair play after all, and help you to make a fresh start."

"I am exceedingly grateful to Lord Coldingham," said Claude fervently, "for his interest in the welfare of a poor fellow of whom he knows so little."

"Why, you see, Claude, we know a good deal more of you than we did before we came into the valleys. Every one speaks well of you; the Moderator especially; and there were some that could not name you without tears."

"And where are you now?"

"At an inn in Fenestrella. A rum sort of a place this, Claude!—My lord was going to take a sketch of the fortress, just because it looked picturesque in the evening sun, hanging half-way

between earth and sky like Mahomet's coffin ; but they were down upon him in a minute ! No drawing to be made of their fortifications ! Oh, my goodness ! when every Frenchman in France may] prowl about our Dover Castle ! and for reasons good—because, in England, every man's house is his castle, and would be defended accordingly, so we don't set overmuch store on a solitary one stuck on a shelf. Well, here we are, you see, on our way to Italy ; because Miss Eyre has married Sir Charles, and we're following in her wake. We had a splendidissimo wedding ! (I'm getting up my Italian, you see.) Bride veiled in French lace, three clergy to marry her ; twelve bridesmaids, six in pink scarfs and six in blue-celest ; Miss Ellen all smiles and tears, Mrs. Hevans, ditto ditto ; carpet down to the carriage doors—crowd without—hurrahs—bride-favours given at the church door—all the world to breakfast—lords and commons, *nobilitatis cum dignitatis*, (John Perry's library comprised the Port Royal Latin Grammar as well as Addison's Letters from Italy,)—no end of champagne and pink ice—speeches, toasts, and showers of tears—new post-carriage with four greys—postilions in

pink satin jackets, French maid and valet in the rumble : off to Naples two-de-sweet !—

—“ Sir Charles is a diplomatt. So they’ve gone forward with bottle and bag, and we follow after like little Jack Lag—we’re to pick them up at Tureen.”

At this moment a group of people with boughs in their hands joyously came towards them, and Claude found himself surrounded by a party of his old friends, including Franz, who had made this long journey to congratulate him on his liberation. His surprise and pleasure were so great that he fairly shed tears; and Lord Coldingham and his daughter watching them from the inn-window, were affected by this simple triumph.


It is not needful to relate what passed between Claude and Lord Coldingham, nor how Claude found that his Bibles had been destroyed, nor how Lord Coldingham insisted on his accepting the pecuniary amount of their value, to pay his way back to Germany, nor how long Claude remained in the valleys. When he recommenced his wanderings, he found his strength much diminished by his winter’s illness, and by his low diet

and sedentary life in prison. He had obtained a new supply of Bibles at Geneva; and he proceeded towards his rendezvous with Pierrot at the time appointed. Just before he reached the spot, he came to a group of people sitting by the wayside, with a rude mule-litter drawn up beside them, whom he presently recognised to be Fritz, Philippa, and the little Albinos. Conrad knew him first, and darted towards him with joyful cries; Josepha shyly hung back, but when he held out his arms to her, she joyfully sprung into them. She had a shade over her eyes, hardly more of a screen than those contrivances which ladies now call *uglies*: it sufficiently prevented her being stared at by passers by, and permitted her to enjoy exercise and fresh air, instead of being cooped up in the cart, which had considerably improved her health and cheerfulness. The whole party seemed comfortable together; and Claude, after partaking of their wayside repast, departed on his journey, well pleased to have seen them. He could hardly bring himself to judge of the little Albinos as fellow-mortals, there was something so wild, yet so shy about them: and the shrill cry which

Conrad had set up on first seeing him had sounded like the signal of the sentinel marmot.

Having joined Pierrot, they crossed the Col de la Croix in safety, with more deliberation than Claude had done when he entered the valley. For some weeks they amicably journeyed together, like Christian and Hopeful, Pierrot insisting on carrying the bag; but they parted when they approached the confines of Germany, as Pierrot could make no way where French or Italian was not spoken; but they arranged to meet again at a future time.

Claude's first business was to take up the German Bibles he had left behind him on quitting the country: with these on his shoulders, he proceeded serenely on his way. He did not tarry long anywhere till he approached the district where we found him at the commencement of this narrative. He first prepared to visit the Schillers, and see whether the good seed sown there had sprung up or withered. As he came in sight of their lonely cottage, he beheld the figure of a girl issuing from the threshold, bearing an old woman in her arms, whom, with some difficulty she carried beneath the lindens and placed on a



seat that surrounded one of the trees. Then she fetched a mat for her feet, then she brought a book from the cottage and sat down beside her and began to read aloud. As Claude drew near, he heard her in a low, sweet voice, repeating, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.—My help cometh even from the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; and he that keepeth thee will not sleep—"

—"Some one is coming," said the young girl, interrupting herself—"Ah, I do believe it is the good man who gave me this book! It is!—Welcome, sir, welcome! How often we have wished to see you!"

"And now that you are come, I can see you no longer," said the old woman, "for I have become blind; but my Jaqueline is the comfort of my life—"

"All owing to this blessed book," said Jaqueline, kissing it. "And it was you who gave it me."

"He that goeth on his way weeping," said Claude, "and bearing good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with

him. I rejoice to see you reading to your mother—I was surprised to see you carrying her.”

“The burthen of a mother,” said Jaqueline, “is always light.”

Schiller was at his work ; but his daughter and wife so earnestly entreated Claude to remain till he returned to his noon-tide meal, which was not far off, that he consented. Their lives were so monotonous that they had little to tell him ; he, on the other hand, had much to tell them ; and his narratives always included a word of exhortation.

At length he was again on his road, and briskly stepping forward towards Hans and Lisa. As he came in sight of the little knoll, on which stood their cottage, glowing in the evening sun, it seemed but yesterday that he had approached it with Mother Agnes, and seen Lisa standing at the door, feeding her tame thrush. Perhaps, in the interim, she had married. He longed to know all about them.

Just at this moment, a hen running across the road, frightened a horse approaching rapidly, who in consequence shyed, and threw his rider, and then galloped along the road. Claude, darting

forward, seized the bridle and stopped the horse, not without receiving a violent blow on the chest; and the shock laid him senseless on the ground, when the horseman presently came up to him, and found the horse standing quietly beside him.

“Hey! This is a bad business,” said he—“Hilloa!” and he shouted and beckoned to some peasants who had already begun to run across the fields towards him, when they saw him thrown, but had paused when they saw the horse stopped.

“Lift this poor fellow up,” said the horseman authoritatively, “and get some water, one of you,—I fear he is stunned. Ha! he has broken a blood-vessel—this is a worse affair than I had supposed—I have been spared and he has been smitten! Poor fellow, poor fellow! Here, take him up gently, and bear him into that cottage—I know something of the people who live there: they are kind-hearted, and will attend to him—”

And Dr. Bauer, for it was he, superintended the removal of poor Claude into Hans’ cottage. Hans had just finished a neat piece of cabinet-work, and was beginning to make some cheerful remark to Lisa, when she uttered a cry, and said,

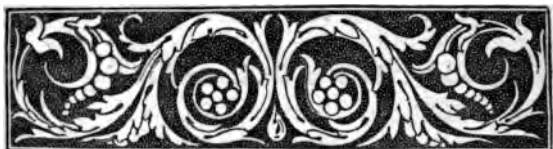
"Oh, father! here is Dr. Bauer bringing a dead man to us!"

"Dead?" cried Hans in dismay.

"Dead or fainting," said Lisa, "some accident must have happened—how unlucky that granny should be from home! Why, I do believe Yes, father! it is Claude!"

The next moment, the poor colporteur was in the strong arms of Hans, who bore him into the kitchen as tenderly as if he had been an infant. Lisa, all in tears, obeyed Dr. Bauer's directions for his recovery; and the peasants, seeing their aid was no longer wanted, retired, after tying up the horse.





CHAPTER XVIII.

CLAUDE IN HARBOUR.

"**S**ILENCE! not a word!" said Dr. Bauer, laying his finger on his lips, as Claude opening his eyes, and looking round somewhat wildly, was about to speak. For a moment, the colporteur's mind was all in confusion; but, the next instant, the sensation of pain and weakness at his chest, his loosened collar, the drops of water scattered on his face, the current of air blowing in on him, his recumbent posture, and the kind faces hanging over him, explained everything. He was content to be silent; he felt supremely happy.

"I am bound to pay particular attention to this poor fellow's case," said Dr. Bauer, apologetically to Hans, "because he got this hurt in my service.

The best way would be to remove him to the infirmary, if it were not so full ; for I suppose you cannot accommodate him very easily here."

"Do not think of removing him," said Hans, "he is a valued friend of ours, and was doubtless on his way to us when the accident occurred—we can't think of parting with him."

"In that case, all is straightforward work," said the doctor ; "keep him still and cool, and perfectly quiet, and give him nothing but cooling drinks—"

Lisa silently gave him a little lemon-water—

—"And I will look in on him in the morning. It will do him no harm to remain on this settle all night. Your mother is not at home, I know, for she sat up last night with a patient of mine, but I shall be just in time to catch her before she leaves town, and will give her a pastrycook's ice ; and a piece of block ice to pound and lay on his chest in case the hemorrhage returns. Farewell."

And pressing Claude's hand kindly, he nodded to Hans and Lisa, and left the cottage. Claude was on the point of speaking ; but Lisa, with a smile, held up her finger to forbid him, and sitting down on a stool by his side, with the lemon-water still in her hand, regarded him with

kind concern. He replied by a look so full of thankfulness and tenderness, that the modest colour rose in her cheeks ; but it died away the next moment, softly and imperceptibly, and the simplicity of her affectionate attention remained unimpaired. Hans now came from seeing the doctor ride off, and sat down by him.

“ Though you may not talk to us,” said he, “ we may talk to you, if we don’t talk too much or too loud ; and I shall begin by saying how heartily glad I am, (and I am sure Lisa is the same,) to see you again under our roof. We have often talked of you, I promise you, and wondered whether we should ever see you again. My mother and Lisa thought not, but I always had a fancy that some day or other you would find us out. Many strange things have happened in your absence.”

“ Better not tell him to-night, perhaps,” said Lisa, gently.

“ Well, perhaps you are right ; though I thought he might sleep the better for knowing. However, Claude, you may, at all events, know that I have studied your blessed Bible day and night, ever since I saw you last ; and you will

doubtless be glad to hear that though I have given up making 'shrines for Diana,' I have plenty of cabinet-work, and never was more prosperous."

"Here come the boys," said Lisa; "perhaps, father, it will be better—" and she whispered to him the remainder of the sentence. Hans nodded approval.

"Don't you go," said he, "I'll see to it myself, for you are the better nurse." And went out.

"And now," said Lisa, "I shall take up my sewing, and sit here quite quietly, so that you can sign to me for anything you want; and if you have any long speech to make, you can write it on this slate; but I think the best thing you can do will be to go to sleep.—Stay, I can make your pillow a little more comfortable—Granny will come home by-and-by, and be a better nurse than I am."

As she smoothed his pillow, she saw his eyes, which had hitherto continually followed her, turn towards the empty niche in the opposite wall.

"Ah," said she softly, "that's gone now—I know what you miss . . . And, Claude," lowering her voice, and hesitating a little, "I don't pray to St. Anne *now*."

“ Oh, Lisa !” cried he, faintly, unable to keep silence any longer, “ if I liked you so much when we thought so differently, what shall I do now if we think alike ?”

A quick, universal blush spread all over her face and neck ; and had scarcely begun to fade away, when it deepened again and again, varying, fading, and heightening like the sunset clouds on a beautiful summer evening. Claude, looking at her with intensity, thought he had never beheld any earthly being so charming ; but, as soon as he became conscious how uncomfortable he was making her, he looked away. On her part, she silently edged away her stool a little, so that she could neither be scrutinised face to face, nor see any sign he might make if he wanted anything ; and totally forgetful how bad a nurse she was hereby proving herself, she commenced sewing silently and diligently, nor ever stayed her hand till Mother Agnes came in.

The good dame had already learnt from Dr. Bauer what to expect, and entered without any of the bustle of a vulgar housewife, but with the collected air of a professional nurse, in which capacity, indeed, her services were often put in

requisition. She came up to Claude and nodded and took his hand, as composedly as if they had parted but yesterday; and then set about making a few simple arrangements for his comfort. These done, she returned to him with the lemon-ice Dr. Bauer had sent him, and began feeding him with it; seeing which, Lisa gathered up her work and was about to retire. But her grandmother suddenly called her back, with

“Lisa! you can do this as well as I; and I have forgotten something. Take my place, child; only don’t set him coughing by feeding him too fast.” And she hastily went out.

Lemon-ice is very pleasant in sultry weather; and it is very pleasant to receive it from the hands of a lovely young woman; especially if the recipient feels that it would be a very easy thing to fall in love with her. Though the ice-plate was of the coarsest Delft, and the spoon, of real imitation silver, had cost about three-pence, never had any luxury appeared to Claude so delicious; he swallowed with the greatest deliberation, for the sake of prolonging the feast; nor did Lisa seem at all inclined to hurry him. As for the rest of the family, they were certainly supping in the

dairy, the pantry, or perhaps the cow-house, to be out of the way; but just as Claude had concluded his repast, Hans came in, and stepping up to him said, "The boys are going to bed, Claude, in a few minutes, but I thought, if it would not disturb you, we might as well have our family worship in here as usual." Claude signified his pleased compliance; and Mother Agnes and the two boys came quietly in.

Hans began by reading the hundred and fifteenth Psalm—"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake," &c. to the concluding "Praise the Lord."

"Dear children," said he, when he had read to the end, "it is hardly possible to open the book of Psalms without coming to these words, 'Praise ye *the Lord*.' That is to say, don't praise this or that saint or holy apostle, nor ascribe glory and honour to any created being, however eminent for sanctity, but only to Him. 'Not unto us, O Lord, but unto *thy* name be the glory.'—'Praise *the Lord*, ye his servants, O praise the name of *the Lord*!' It is nailed down and hammered well in. 'The fear of *the Lord* is the beginning of

wisdom : a good understanding have all they that do thereafter.'—They are on the right course ; the way that leadeth to life everlasting. You, Quentin and Max, have often sung 'Non nobis Domine,' without thinking much of the words, even if you understood them.—Well, this is the meaning of them, which I have just been reading to you in your own language; 'Not unto us, O Lord!'—and we will sing 'Non nobis' presently, because now you can sing not only with your lips but with your understandings also. 'Not unto us, O Lord, but unto *thy* name be the praise'—for what?—'for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.' Yes! God is a God of mercy, and he is also a God of truth. He will not say one thing and do another. He said at the very beginning, that the wages of sin, even of such a sin as eating an apple contrary to his commandment, should be *death*—and death came into the world, and has reigned here ever since. Otherwise he would not have been a God of *truth*. He also said that the Son of Man, that is, Christ, should bruise the head of the serpent, that is, of the devil; of sin: and therein he showed himself a God of mercy. And he has been a God of truth

in his promises as well as in his threats—*he never fails in his word*. Consequently, all who will avail themselves of his own terms of reconciliation, may have their sins forgiven for the sake of Jesus Christ—that is *justification*:—and be made free from the power of sin by the influence of the Holy Spirit—that is *sanctification*. And when they are justified and sanctified, they may truly exclaim, ‘O grave! where is thy victory? O death! where is thy sting?’ And now, dear children, remember what is justification and what is sanctification; and how excellently God has proved himself to be to us a God of mercy as well as a God of truth. Let us pray.”

They all knelt down. After prayer, Hans took up his violin, and accompanied his children’s voices in the sweet solemn anthem of “Non nobis, Domine!” They then kissed him, shook hands silently with Claude, and stole off to bed. When Hans drew near to Claude, he was pained to see the tears trickling down his cheeks.

“I am afraid this has been too much for you,” said he tenderly.

“Oh, no,” said Claude.

“Hush! you must not speak.”

"But indeed I must," said Claude energetically whispering, and drawing his friend's head close down to him that he might hear what he had to say, "You have made me see myself in a new light; you have made me feel more strongly than I ever did before, that I am an unprofitable servant. I have done nothing, absolutely nothing, to glorify God! I have wasted opportunities, evaded difficulties, squandered my one talent. While *you*, with no privileges, no advantages, have made long strides towards the kingdom of heaven. In those few simple words to your children was embodied the sum of gospel truth!"

"Why, Claude, this is mere weakness!" cried Hans in an expostulatory voice, "sheer weakness of body and mind! *I*, a better teacher than *you*? Why, who taught the teacher? During the short time you abode with us, were not your words like goads? and yet sweeter than honey? My doctrine and yours is one and the same, because derived in both instances from the same source—the pure Word of Life: but my ministrations are but the poor, weak shadow of yours, and all that they have of body in them, or of

soul, is derived from their original. There's nothing original in *me*, man!—except original *sin*. But, you see, I'm in earnest. And you would never have made me so, if you had not been in earnest yourself. No, no, you are now, by God's providence, in great languor and depression, and see things in a bad light."

"I can never see myself in any but a bad light," whispered Claude.

"But the right thing to do," pursued Hans, "is not to see yourself *at all*, but only the *true* light, which is Christ. To keep your eyes upon the Light that came into the world that all men, through him, should be saved."

"Right! right!" whispered the colporteur, pressing his hand.

"Why, now," continued Hans, "if the Israelites that were bitten by serpents had kept poring over their wounds and aggravating their individual grievances,—‘See how bad *I* am!’—‘Oh, you’re nothing to *me*!’—would they have got cured, think you? They would have died, every man alive! Instead of which, Moses bade them not contemplate their own wretched bodies *at all*, but to keep their eyes fixed on the brazen serpent."

“Right, right,” reiterated Claude.

“And that’s what you must do, my dear friend. Don’t begin to aggravate your sickness by dwelling upon this or that short-coming, and thinking that God won’t forgive you, and you won’t forgive yourself. We’re *all* unprofitable servants, and when we have done our best, we have only done what was our bounden duty to do,—let that alone. God knows exactly what we are; and yet hires us for his servants after all; hires us with the wages paid in advance of his own blood; and if that won’t melt us, what *will*? You are a sinner in his sight; so am I; but we’re *pardoned* sinners, there’s the gist of it! The righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ is upon *all* them that believe; there is *no* difference; for *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Where is boasting then? it is excluded. By what law? The law of faith; by which alone even the just man lives.”

“Hans! it is balm to my heart to hear you!”

“Why, Claude, I’m only repeating your very own words, and the words of St. Paul. Come here, Lisa, and bid this dear man take comfort in God: though now, for a season, if need be, he

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is in manifold temptations. You have made a Bible Christian of this girl, Claude; mediate though not immediately—she is the very joy of my heart! See how you have been the instrument of happiness to me. Nay, don't turn away, Lisa; I *will* hold you fast. Sensitive as you are, you shall hear me for once say how I love you. I assure you, Claude, there has often been a little competition between us which should have your Bible—she on the watch till I had done with it, and I on the watch till she had done with it. At last the dear girl laid out the money I had given her for a pair of ear-rings or any toy or trinket she might fancy at the fair, on a Bible for herself; which she got with some little trouble. But even now, I must confess to you, yours continues the greatest favourite with us both; chiefly, I believe, from its having come from *you*."

As Claude's eyes slowly turned from one loved face to the other, he felt something of what Othello expressed of the fulness of joy, when he said,

"Oh, if 'twere now to die,
'Twere now to be *most happy*."

"And we are not the only fruits of your good

seed," continued Hans, drawing Lisa yet closer to him and making her sit on his knee ; "there are other converts, some through my instrumentality, some to whom you imparted the gospel of peace yourself. So that we are already a little church ; and we have a hired room in which we meet to read, and pray, and consult together on the word of God. This has not occurred without many drawbacks, and much persecution, you may be sure ; but still we keep our heads above water. Our grand want is of a pastor and schoolmaster ; for you see, they consider us as excommunicated persons, and would chase our children from their schools even if we had not withdrawn them ; so that the poor boys get little or no learning : and we ourselves are in deplorable want of an accredited teacher ; so that, when you get about a little, the best thing you can do will be to supply these wants till we can get a regularly ordained minister ; for I am sure it will be some time before you can safely carry about that heavy bag."

"And now, do you carry him into the room I have prepared for him," said Mother Agnes, "and help him to undress ; for it will never do

for him to pass the night where he is. I have made everything comfortable, and when you are in bed, Claude, I will come and tuck you up, and give you a stick to hammer against the wall, in case you want anything in the night."

Claude got into his room without being carried; and he fell asleep and dreamed that Lisa was feeding him with lemon ice.





CHAPTER XIX.

LEMON ICE IS VERY NICE.

WAS it not somewhat singular that a man whose soul had been ennobled for several years by the absorbing pursuit of a grand and holy purpose, should find nothing better to dream about than eating lemon ice? Was it not remarkable that the faith of a practised missionary should suddenly be at so low an ebb, as to make him grasp at a mere fragment of his own teaching restored to him by a poor unlearned brother in Christ, as a drowning man might catch at a plank? We are all liable to these ebbs and flows. The nature of Claude's illness was to bring down his strength very much, and make him as low as a weaned child. Happiness was almost too great for him to bear one moment,

and humiliation was almost too great for him to bear the next : whom the Lord loveth, he frequently thus chasteneth. Under this trial, it was a blessed thing that Hans was promoted to play, in a humble way, the part of Jothan to David, when "he strengthened his hand in God." Jonathan, there can be little question, was immeasurably David's inferior in spiritual experience ; and yet in his hour of trouble he was helpful to him and cheered his soul.

Whether it were owing to the cool air which ventilated the little chamber through the casement Mother Agnes had left open, or to twenty drops of diluted sulphuric acid in a wine-glass full of water, which she administered to him just before he closed his eyes, certainly the first part of the night was spent in refreshing sleep and pleasant dreams. But when Mother Agnes, shading her lamp with her hand, stole in noiselessly and without her shoes, to look upon him about two hours past midnight, a cold dew was on his brow, an ashen hue had settled on his countenance, and his features were contracted with pain. She cautiously placed the lamp where it would not shine in his eyes, and quietly seated

herself beside him in an old arm-chair, to watch through the remaining hours of darkness.

Perhaps owing to her sedulous care, which would by no means allow of his leaving his bed till the physician had seen him, the perfect silence and stillness in which he was kept were favourable to his amendment; for Dr. Bauer, who did not call till early in the afternoon, pronounced him to be doing as well as he had expected; though he would by no means hear of his sitting upright, or speaking above a whisper, while the dull oppressive pain at his chest lasted. He was glad he had had some quiet sleep at the beginning of the night. Claude gratefully whispered to him, "I think, sir, it was *the ice*. . ."

"Oh, very well," said Dr. Bauer, smiling, "you are welcome, then, to have one set down to my account daily, if you think it worth sending for."

Now, Claude had in fact had a second ice, which had been sent for and paid for by Lisa; no one being in her confidence but Quentin, who undertook the commission. And though it was not quite so great a luxury the second day as the

first, inasmuch as Quentin administered it, and, possibly from his hands being rather warm, it would run about the plate, still Claude was grateful for the delicacy. After two or three days' seclusion and silence, he was promoted to the wooden settle in the kitchen, where he lay at length, reading the Bible all day; with Hans at his work-bench a few yards off, and Lisa flitting in and out, hither and thither, in the performance of various little domestic offices. Yes, here was the poor colporteur fairly laid on his back, with no prospect of resuming his labours for a long time, if ever; a consideration which sometimes filled his eyes with silent tears; and if nobody happened to observe them, well and good; but sometimes little Max would come up and wipe them off, which made him feel ashamed; or Lisa would suddenly leave off singing and look sad, or Hans would kindly take his hand for a minute, and bring forth some soul-strengthening text. And then he would smile, and fix his eyes again on his book; and, the next time they looked at him, they would see his quiet face lit up with some inward lamp of faith and love that an invisible ministrant had kindled.

Now and then, two or three of Hans' brethren in the faith would drop in after working hours, and hold little extempore meetings for reading, prayer, and psalmody. Sometimes they attempted expositions, and had discussions ; and Claude was in a nervous fever to set them right in two words, which yet they would not, in their tender care of him, let him speak. Then he would try to express himself on the slate, and they would breathe on it and efface what he had written in their awkward attempts to decypher it. In despair he would let them go on in their own way, and hope better times and better teaching were in store ; and he tried to let patience have her perfect work in him, and to be content, since it was God's will, to be an inactive servant. One night, after one of these little meetings, there was a great smashing of the cottage windows. Hans put his head out, and asked what it was for.

"For harbouring your devil's-agent and holding his synagogues," returned a brutal voice. "We'll break every pane in your casements before we have done with you."

"So this is your Christianity, is it?" said Hans. "Suppose you step in and hear a little of

mine. Wait a bit, I'll slip on my clothes and be with you directly. We'll have a candle, and I'll read you a chapter or two out of my good book. I know who you are very well by your voices ; and you've done me no harm, but good ; for my book says, ' Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.' I'm coming down, my lads !”

Of course, they were all off before he had opened the door. A few shillings repaired the mischief ; and his windows were never broken again.

The little boys had now no schooling, but German children are never in want of household or field avocations, so that they were usefully employed, one way or another, all day long. Still, their minds were lying fallow, in spite of Hans making each of them read a chapter in the Bible to him morning and evening ; and when Claude began to amend, he was thankful to make the only return in his power for the kindness he was receiving, by attending a little to their writing and arithmetic. They sat on low stools beside him, so that he could overlook them as he lay on the settle, and speak to them in a low voice ; and,

when they were very good, (which indeed they were always,) he rewarded them with some account of his wanderings, his meeting with the little Albinos, his losing himself on the Col de la Croix, and his imprisonment at Fenestrella. To such narrations would Max listen so greedily, and respond by such animated expressions of delight, that Lisa, tantalized beyond bearing, must needs bring her stool closer and listen too; sewing all the while and affecting only a moderate degree of interest. But Claude had read many pages of the human heart, and it was one of the dearest and sweetest experiences of his life when he found and knew himself to be winning his way into the sympathy of a girl whom, the more he saw of the beauty of her daily conduct, the more he esteemed. As for Hans, there are many persons who can think of and attend to two things at once; but he could attend to *three*. Firstly, there was his handicraft work, which occupied his busy hands; secondly, there was the Bible lying open at his side, on which he continually cast down his eye, taking in a verse at a time and committing it to memory; thirdly, his ears, which must have been pretty sharp, contrived to catch a good deal

of what was passing in undertones at the settle nearly behind him ; and one would almost suspect him of having had an eye at the back of his head, he knew so well all that was going on there, rejoicing over it in his quiet heart. " They're in for it," thought Hans ; " one and the other of them, fairly falling in love, and one's as good as the other, and there's not a pin to choose between them, nor any one else that I know of worthy of either, so I'm heartily glad of it ! "

As for Mother Agnes, she was so busy out of doors, as to have little time to waste on speculations about what was passing at home—either her professional services as nurse were required, or there was the cow's fodder to collect, or there were the pigeons to kill, and carry to market, or the clothes to wash in the river—always something to do ! And as for the changes that had taken place in the family, from one form of belief to another, she smilingly said " she did not see much difference." Yes ! the impracticable, impenetrable, imperturbable old woman, with her great, deep-set, dark blue eyes and smiling lips,—eyes that, like Cardinal Consalvi's, seemed made to look into all mysteries, and lips that set ill-

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humour and controversial heat at defiance, who was so shrewd, so keen, so benevolent,—said she did not think Catholicism and Protestantism had much difference ! There was no shaking that out of her, or coming round her, or making her swerve from that one grand axiom in the least. They were obliged to consider it lost labour, and to go on as comfortably all together as ever.

One afternoon, Dr. Bauer looked in on them, and pronounced Claude to be in such a fair way of recovery, that there was no longer need of alarm for him if he would be but moderately careful.

“ You must return to your work by degrees,” said the doctor. “ What is it ? ”

“ Colportage, sir.”

“ *What ?* ”

“ Selling Bibles, sir, from house to house.”

“ Ha ! I have heard of that trade before. There are not many, I believe, who practise it.”

“ I think I am, as yet, the only one, sir, in this country.”

“ Nay, I remember falling in with one of your brethren in our town, a year or so ago—”

"That was me, sir."

"Indeed! I had quite forgotten you."

"You bought a Bible of me, sir."

"Oh yes, I recollect."

"Have you read it, sir?"

"You silly fellow! How should I have time?"

"We must all find time to die, sir."

"So this is what I get by my attendance gratis! An extempore sermon!"

"Oh no, sir."

"Oh yes, I say! There's a good old saying, my friend, 'Let the cobbler stick to his last.' You undertake to cure men's souls—my time is devoted to their bodies—yours among the rest."

"Yes, sir, and that was what made me think of your soul."

"Why, you don't think me worse than my neighbours, I hope?"

"It is because, sir, you appear so much better than the generality, that I can't forbear hazarding a word in season."

"Always take care, though, my good fellow, that it is in season."

"St. Paul, sir, ventured to be instant 'in season and out of season.'"

“Ha! I recollect, now, you knocked me down with St. Paul before. You swear by him.”

“Oh no, I don’t swear at all.”

“Well, I only meant figuratively, you queer fellow. You’re a humourist, I know.”

“You said, sir, a cobbler should stick to his last. You must not be surprised then, if I stick to mine. Now, I was thinking, sir, that, whereas I have, as you say, the cure of souls, and you the cure of bodies, our Lord undertook the cure of both bodies and souls, and while he preached salvation, he went about healing all manner of diseases. What a glorious thing, sir, to unite the two! What a field of action is that which lies before a Christian physician!”

“I am not for *clumping* professions, my friend. A single one is enough for me, and demands a life-time. However, though my time is precious, and I have been gossiping with you a good while already, I will just mention a case that occurred to me in my practice within the twelvemonth, which will interest you, as a Bible had something to do with it. There was a genteel family living in our town some little time ago, named Wagner. One of the daughters had a complaint which

defied my art to make out ; I thought it nervous, she would have it was organic. However, nervous or not, she so wasted away under it that her life became endangered. Try what I would, she declined day by day. All at once her disease seemed to have made a stand ; her pulse became less irritable and a little stronger ; the peculiar, harassed expression of her face disappeared. I had no way of accounting for the change, and watched her very narrowly. One day when I called, nobody was at home to show me up stairs ; the maid had gone out and left the door ajar. I found my way up to Mrs. Amelia's room—"

" Mrs. Amelia !" repeated Claude.—" Yes, sir—"

" She was dozing on the sofa, and in her relaxed grasp was a book. She had evidently been reading. It was in a rich case of green velvet lined with pink silk, but, on examining it I found it to be a Bible of very ordinary getting up—just such an one as you sold me. It was scored throughout with pencil-marks. I was examining it with some curiosity, when she awoke and caught me in the fact. ' Ah, doctor,' said she in

the gentlest voice, 'that is hardly fair of you—you know very well that book is prohibited; but however that may be, I have received more good from it than from all your nostrums.' And I really believe she had. The fever of the mind being allayed, the body had fair play. When she became strong enough to travel, I sent them all off to the mineral baths."

"Can you tell me, sir, how it fared with the poor artist?"

"What poor artist?—Oh, Adolph Lizst, whom we found in the garret. Oh, we got up a little subscription for him when he got well, and sent him to Rome, where he is now. He's a clever fellow. Well, good bye; don't try to do too much at first. Remember, fair and softly wins the day."

"What a nice man he is!" said Lisa, after watching him ride away. "If I were a man, I think I should like to be a good physician."

"Not a physician of souls, then," said Claude.

"Well, that would be still better, certainly. Did you know anything of that Mrs. Amelia?"

"I sold her the Bible."

—"Who's talking too loud?" said Mother Agnes, coming in from the cow-house.

“Nay, dear Mother Agnes, surely my tone was moderate enough.”

However, he lowered it at her bidding, the less reluctantly as Lisa was sewing just within ear-shot, and every one else was at their own avocations. The doctor's favourable opinion of him had raised his spirits; the prospect seemed to brighten before him; he became animated on the subject of what he should do, and spoke so fast about it in his energetic whisper that Lisa was frequently obliged to say “hey? what?” and edge her stool a little nearer.

By and by, Hans began to shake his shoulders with suppressed laughter. “Marry come up!” thought he to himself, “marry *has* come up at last, or my name's not Hans. I'm sure that was the word! Oh, that young puss! And she sits there still! No, she's going softly away. And he's lying quite quiet, as pleased as Punch, I'll warrant him, at having broached the subject.”





CHAPTER XX.

CLAUDE'S DAY OF REJOICING.

“ I SUPPOSE, Claude,” said Hans, as they were preparing to separate for the night, “ we shall soon have to say good-bye to you now ? ”

“ Why ? ” said Claude, looking uneasy.

“ Oh, because you’re such a restless wandering fellow, that you never stay long in one place. And the doctor has taken leave of you.”

“ I am sure he is not fit to travel yet, father ! ” said Lisa hastily.

“ Who said he was, missy ? ” rejoined Hans, putting his arm round her waist, so that she could not get away.

“ Are you tired of me, Hans ? ” said Claude.

“ Tired of you, my dear fellow ? ” cried Hans.

"Why, I should like you to remain here always ; and so would Lisa !"

Lisa here made a sudden movement to go off ; which, having been foreseen, was prevented.

"Then, if we are all of a mind," said Claude, "why shouldn't I stay?"

"That's just what *I* say," returned Hans ; "let us just go on as we are."

"No, not just as we are," said Claude.

"Why not?" said Hans.

"I have thought of an improvement on that plan," said Claude.

"Let's hear it," said Hans.

"I am afraid of what Lisa may say," said Claude, gently offering to take her hand, which was very decidedly put out of his reach, on her father's shoulder.

"Oh, never mind her," said Hans, "what voice has she in the matter? The question is between you and me—shall you go or stay?"

"And the answer," said Claude, "is, I will stay,—as the husband of Lisa—otherwise, (and his voice faltered,) the sooner I go the better."

Here there was a violent and final effort made to get free, failing which, the imprisoned bird

yielded to its bondage ; but Hans could feel the poor little heart beating piteously against his arm.

“ The answer is for her to make, rather than for me,” said Hans, “ though I know what it will be. She won’t have you.”

“ I’d rather hear it from her than from you, though,” said Claude.

“ Why, man ! don’t you see she can’t speak ?” said Hans. “ Here’s a colour for you !”

“ Father ! you really are abominable !” said Lisa, giving him a push.

“ Well, if you’ve anything to say, why don’t you say it ? Here’s a straightforward man waiting for a straightforward answer. Will you not give it him, yea or nay ? Dumb as a dormouse, Claude ! I’m sorry for you, my man. She’s waiting for Caspar.”

“ And I can tell you, father,” cried Lisa, “ that you are completely mistaken !—And I wish you both a very good night !”

And with a sudden rush against his arm, she freed herself and ran off.

“ Well,” said Hans, laughing, “ are you satisfied with your answer or not ?”

“ Perhaps I should not be,” said Claude,

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"had not I obtained a rather more positive one *before !*"

"What a shame !" said Hans.

"Why," said Claude, "I meant to tell you this very night, only you forestalled me. In a word, dear friend, will you give me your greatest treasure? You will not have the heart to say no?"

The two men grasped each other's hands.

"The very thing I wished of all others, Claude !" said Hans. "And if you will continue to live with us, there will be no difficulty. We have plenty and to spare, and shall share and share alike."

"I hope to be soon able to put my full share of earnings to the common stock," said Claude. "I have been thinking of your proposal of my becoming schoolmaster and Scripture-reader to our little church, till we are able to get an ordained minister, and then I will resume my colportage."

"What will Lisa say to that?"

"Lisa sees the matter exactly as I do, and has consented. These will be my head-quarters."

“Well! so be it! My blessing be with you!”

But though the father’s blessing was so willingly bestowed, it was not so easy to obtain the blessing of the priest. Marriage is reckoned by the Roman Catholics among their seven sacraments; and to receive one of these sacraments is virtually to acknowledge yourself a member of their church, however fraudulently bestowed, or under whatever mental reservations accepted. Claude and Lisa were too consistently Protestant to think of being united on these terms; and the question was beginning to occasion them much perplexity and uneasiness, when providentially they learnt that a Protestant minister was in their neighbourhood. To him they applied without delay, and after some necessary preliminaries, Lisa, who had almost begun to doubt whether she should ever get married at all, found herself converted into Mrs. Malan considerably sooner than she had expected.

The good minister, interested in the account given by Claude of himself and the little knot of converts with whom he was connected, visited the infant church, which assembled, like the first dis-

ciples, in "a large upper room," they having been already obliged by their Roman Catholic landlords frequently to shift their quarters. About forty persons here drew together, who listened to M. Schloss with marked and earnest attention; but when, a twelvemonth afterwards, he again visited the little flock, which had meanwhile been under Claude's charge, he was surprised and affected to find three hundred persons collected in a little chapel of their own, built by their own labour and subscribed for out of their own earnings. The following year the progress was still more extraordinary. They had obtained and were supporting an ordained minister; they had built a school-house, the chapel was enlarged and filled to overflowing, and two or three hundred people, for whom accommodation could not be found, were hanging about the doors and windows. Claude, meanwhile, having planted, had left Apollos to water. At the end of eighteen months from his marriage, he had resumed his wanderings. He made three or four progresses every year, returning to Hans' cottage as his head-quarters; and when Lisa would tenderly persuade him to postpone his next journey a little longer, he

would answer her with, "There is so much to do! The fields are white unto harvest, and I am the only reaper!"

At length, after some years, he was surprised and delighted to encounter a fellow-labourer in the field. He was sent out by the Berg Bible Society; and though not in the position of a regular hawker of the Scriptures, like Claude, being in connexion with the ecclesiastical authorities of Elberfeld, Claude gave him the right hand of fellowship, and wished him good speed.

After this, in his various progresses, his path was crossed by another, and yet another, and yet another. A lively interest was beginning to manifest itself, not merely for the perusal of the New Testament, but for a practical application of the precepts found in it. The operations of the colporteurs were gradually extending, their numbers were continually increasing; and they were everywhere received with an eagerness and cordiality truly astonishing. In the summer of 1833 Claude encountered his old friend and fellow-prisoner Pierrot, now a regularly paid and licensed colporteur, who told him that about eight thousand copies of the Scriptures had, up to that time,

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been distributed in France ; through the agency of a hundred and fifty colporteurs. In 1837, a hundred applicants for the same office presented themselves out of a very small district ; forty-four of them were selected, and in four months they sold forty-five thousand copies of the Bible. Within fifteen years the sale had considerably exceeded a million.

But Germany is a country "doubly barred." Nevertheless, an English agent of our British and Foreign Bible Society commenced operations in Belgium, taking a man with him to carry his carpet-bag ; and the success he met with in the sale of the Scriptures induced him to undertake their circulation on a wholesale scale. Great difficulties were encountered at first, but they were gradually conquered ; and some of the very governments which were at first most opposed to the system of colportage, at length granted the colporteurs legal permission to carry on their work.

Claude may now sing *Nunc Dimittis* ; or rather, he may say in his own loved native tongue, and *does* say continually, " Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word :

for mine eyes have seen thy salvation !” He has closed the eyes of his friend Hans, whose death-bed was a veritable euthanasia ; as for Mother Agnes, she had died suddenly, and quite easily, many years before. Many young olive-branches gather round the colporteur’s table ; he is in green and vigorous old age, but is beginning to rest from his labours ; his circuits are shorter, his rests longer, and his youngest boy carries his bag. Two of his grown-up sons are colporteurs ; a third is married, and manages the farm belonging to the patriarchal dwelling. His only daughter, who is to be married to the schoolmaster on her eighteenth birthday, and who is the darling of the house, is the very image of what Lisa was when Claude first saw her in the evening sun, feeding her thrush from her mouth.



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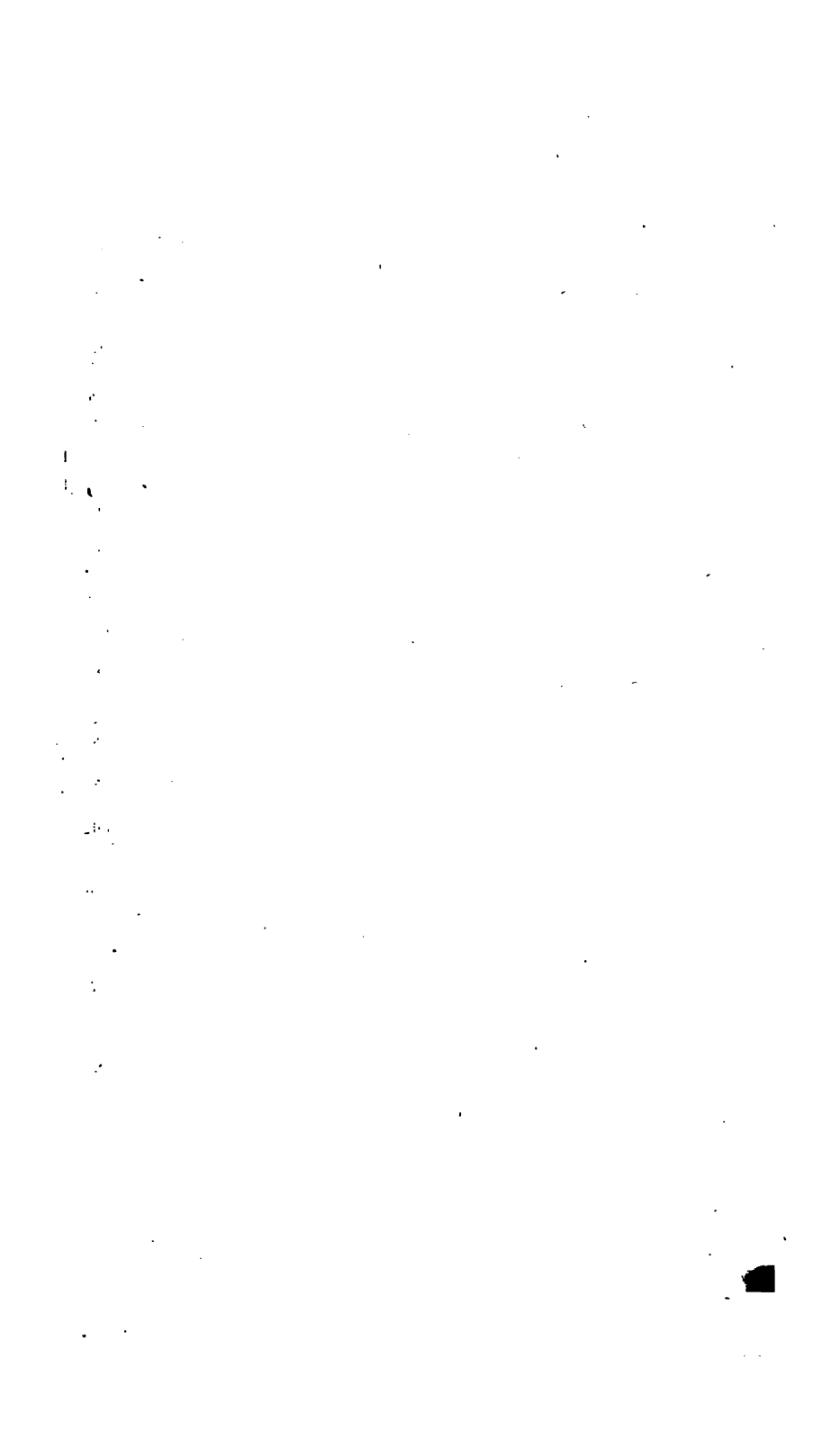
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